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Date

THE TUDOR WENCH

“ As they have shewed you a Queene, I expose to your view a Princesse ; they in her Majestie, I in her Minoritie ; they the passages of her incomparable Life from the Scepter to the Sepulchre, as shee was a Soveraigne ; I the processe of her time from the Cradle to the Crowne, as shee was a sad and sorrowfull Subject. . . .”

Epistle to the Reader, from “England’s Elizabeth”
(Heywood, 1631).

Novels by the Same Author

RIDERS OF THE WIND

CLOTH OF GOLD

HIS ELIZABETH

ECHO ANSWERS

BOUND TO HAPPEN



A PORTRAIT OF THE YOUNG ELIZABETH

By Ezra Winter. Inspired by a study of four authentic contemporary paintings, one of
which is reproduced as Plate I.

The Tudor Wench

by Elswyth Thane



London
Hurst & Blackett, Ltd.

5th Impression

Made and Printed in Great Britain at
The Mayflower Press, Plymouth. William Brendon & Son, Ltd.
1933

TO
HERBERT LIVINGSTON SATTERLEE
AND
LOUISA PIERPONT SATTERLEE

FOREWORD

TO avoid cumbering the text with tedious explanations, footnotes, or tiresome little numbers peppered through the lines, I have placed all corroborative material and sources in the Notes at the back of the book, with page numbers as guides to the references. For instance, a contemporary sidelight on Elizabeth's childhood shabbiness occurs in a letter written by her governess and preserved in the Cottonian MSS., which I reprint as a note to page 13 ; the yellow kirtle is described in a quotation from Mary's Privy Purse in the note to page 35, etc.

Prefaces are always skipped, so I have put mine at the end.

E. T.

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THE TUDOR WENCH

CHILD

I

SHE smoothed the pale blue silk of her dress with anxious finger-tips, pressing firmly with her thumb where a small loop of gilt braid hung loose. She was to have had a new dress weeks ago, but the King had forgotten again, and this one had been let down and faced back with a strip cut from an old blue petticoat of Mary's. The facing was therefore of a different blue and was not supposed to show, though the worn line of the original hem was visible still, two inches above the bottom. Unlike Mary, who had finished, one grew.

She sighed, pressing with her thumb the obstinate loop of gilt braid. She had not noticed it while they dressed her in such haste, and there was no time now for even her own clever needle, lest she be caught with it hanging to her by a tell-tale thread. The afternoon was swamped in one of those sudden squalls of irritable flurry when one stood static in the swirl, an atom of beleaguered calm in the midst of domestic upheaval.

Perhaps if one wet one's finger to the loose bit and then pressed. . . . But that was unsuccessful and left a smudge, though one's finger was quite clean.

She frowned down at herself, less in bad temper than in anxiety, for she wished to look her best to-day and she loved pretty clothes always. Ah, well, perhaps he would not notice that the blue silk was shabby, he was probably quite old and no doubt he did not see as well as he might. Everyone at Court was old, except Edward, who was too young to notice things. Whereas Elizabeth Tudor was six.

An hour after midday a farm lad had come panting across the fields, goggle-eyed with news—gentlemen on horseback were approaching from London where the King was. Hertford Castle slipped promptly into panic. Mary flew off to change her dress. Fires were built and rushes freshened. The kitchen bustled with the preparation of meats and tarts and jellies, so that soon an odour of cloves and cooking stole up the stairs. Someone fell upon Elizabeth, who sat murmuring her Latin verbs into an exercise book, and washed her face and hands—there were little tendrils

round her ears still damp from the cloth—and bundled her into her best dress, the blue silk with gilt braid.

Thin winter sunlight made a diamond pattern on the bare oak floor round her small shoes with their tired blue bows. She moved forward a step and the slanting bars of shadow fell across the full skirt which reached, thanks to Mary's petticoat, properly to her instep. The gilt braid showed tarnished beside the juvenile brightness of the cheerful reddish ringlets at the edge of her cap. The cap was new and clean, anyway. She herself had helped to sew it.

The sunbeam where she stood was perceptibly warmer than the rest of the high room, with its myriad panes of glass in a bow casement, round which the hangings stirred in a perpetual draught. She paused there in the sun, spreading her hands to it as to a fire. Their natural delicacy was chapped and red with cold, but they were very clean to-day, with the nails freshly trimmed. She saw them now for the first time, really—those hands which were always to be her greatest beauty ; noticed that the trimming of nails was enhancing and approved ; wondered, greatly daring, if Mary would allow one to use a bit of the rose-water lately sent her as a gift by Lady Hertford, along with the quince pics which were all gone days ago. Mary's hands were knobby at the knuckles, but Mary had rings and Mary had a wonderful gold chain which had come from Spain with Catherine of Aragon all those years ago when she was a young bride, younger than Mary was now. Apparently one's own mother, also dead, had bequeathed one no trinkets . . . ? Elizabeth Tudor was leaving babyhood behind.

A door opened in the end of the room and a new draught came in, raising the warm ashes on the great hearth below its carved and burnished oak overmantel. She shivered in the sun and turned, expecting the awaited summons. But it was only a lad with a log to mend the fire.

He grinned frankly at the little lonely figure in the centre of the room, and pulled his forelock with the same hand which hastily fumbled off his cap, and mumbled an apology, and went about his business with the fire, his blue eyes atwinkle at her smallness and her dignity. She watched him, gilded by the sunbeam in her old blue dress, her thumb absently seeking its futile post again, almost as though my Lady Elizabeth's Grace cherished a pain in her middle.

The room filled slowly with a murk of smoke.

"It wants the bellows, Dickon," she remarked at last, and coughed.

"It do, your Grace," he agreed, pleased again at how she always remembered his name and called him by it ; (unlike the Lady Mary with her gruff-voiced "*Boy !*") "I'll blow."

He blew, and smoke eddied out into the room. The bellows were downstairs in the great hall, which was in readiness for the visitors—a long way, through cold stone corridors. He blew till he was purple and a glint of flame shot up.

Her Grace drew near, watching.

" 'Tis a good pair of lungs, Dickon ! " she laughed, and eyed his apoplectic colour with approval.

" Oh, ay," he boasted, swelling. " No need for bellows, my lady ! "

Her Grace came nearer.

" It was left too long," she observed sagely.

" I've been at the fire in the hall," he explained between great puffs. " We've had a time down there, I can tell you ! There's nobody gets off without a clout on the ear to-day ! "

Small shoes with blue bows toed the hearth.

" Blow there," she directed, pointing. " Just there at the side—it's brightest." And stooping, she added her tiny breath to his. " Blow, Dickon—blow ! " she cried, pink-faced and laughing. " Together, now—I'm helping—blow ! "

" Elizabeth ! "

The tornado ceased on a splutter and Lady Bryan, the governess, bore down upon them. Dickon ducked, but her expert hand landed sharply on the side of his head as he dived for the door which had just swung to behind her. Elizabeth, always valiant in a crisis, snatched his cap from the hearth and hurled it well and truly past him, so that he caught it up, Atalanta-like, in flight. The great door banged on his escape.

Her Grace drew a decorous sigh and smoothed back her ruddy curls, unconscious of a smudge across her cheek.

" The fire was left too long," she remarked in masterly imitation of Mary's most royal manner. " I have been cold."

But Lady Bryan would not play that game to-day. She fell to tweaking here and brushing there, and she scrubbed the smudged cheek with a corner of her kerchief till the thin skin burned, scolding all the while—could not my Lady Elizabeth be trusted out of her women's sight but she must roll in the ashes—was it not enough that they had the King's messenger unexpectedly upon them, in who knew what sort of temper after his journey, and bearing who could guess what news on his tongue—

" Perhaps I am to go to Court," suggested Elizabeth, skipping.

But Lady Bryan would not have that either. Unseemly to put words into the mouth of the King's messenger—the King was busy with his new marriage plans—he had no time now for daughters at Court—theirs to bide his will until they came of a suitable age and wisdom, to say nothing of deportment, to find favour in his eyes—

" Who do you think it will be to-day ? " inquired Elizabeth, allowing herself to be revolved for a final inspection while her glancing curiosity flitted back to the approaching emissary come on his unpredictable errand from that distant splendour called London.

Lady Bryan would not commit herself—a reddish beard, the boy had said, and an unfriendly look withal—it might be Sir Thomas Wriothesley again, she conceded, as her private fears outstripped her discretion—he rode often on the King's bidding

these days—she secretly prayed God that it might not be the Lord Privy Seal, Thomas Cromwell himself, come about the clothes and money she so unceasingly begged of him for her royal charges—

“ I know ! ” said Elizabeth, and spread her small fine hands against the warmth of the new blaze. “ ‘Twill be another suitor for Mary ! She hates them so ! ”

Still Lady Bryan would admit nothing—though indeed that was less calamitous than some of the possibilities which had chilled her own speculations—and while she was sketching in further rebukes and admonitions Dickon’s tousle-head appeared cautiously at the door again.

“ ’Tis Sir Thomas Wriothesley as ever is, madam—Noll spied him at the crossroads and came by the lane to warn us—”

“ There, I was afraid—Sir Thomas again—so soon ? What is it now, I wonder ! Get along with you, boy—away ! —and how many ride with him this time, in pity’s name—” Lady Bryan hustled out, shooing Dickon before her.

Down into the very kitchens she penetrated, where there was soon the blubbering of a scullery maid who had blundered at the wrong minute ; down to have the lids off all the pots and a finger in every pie, for she took her perilous post of governess to the King’s daughters very seriously, the good woman. They kept to plain fare at Hertford, except when visitors came—there was no money for fripperies in the scanty allowance doled out from a grudging treasury for the maintenance of this half-forgotten household. But the royal messengers must be well served and fed when they came, and after they were gone the castle would dine on their leavings for days.

Sir Thomas Wriothesley, the new Secretary, with his cold manner and grim green gaze, was not a man to be lightly received. His coming meant that large matters would be afoot. He it was who had wooed by proxy for the King (unsuccessfully) the Emperor’s niece Christina, Dowager Duchess of Milan—pert Christina of the famous dimples, who pointed out that she had but one head, which was not enough for a wife of the King of England. Wriothesley had not thought that very funny, but it got round in spite of him and all Europe tittered. It was Wriothesley, too, who directed the rifling of St. Thomas’s tomb at Canterbury, adding to the royal coffers its fabulous chests of treasure. And it was Wriothesley, Cromwell’s creature, who had co’ne all bowing and wreathed in glacial smiles to collect from Mary the signed admission of her ultimate surrender after that long written duel of hers with his master ; the pitiful document called a “ confession,” in which Catherine’s heartbroken daughter wearily acknowledged at last that Catherine’s marriage to the King had been “ by God’s law and man’s law incestuous and unlawful ” : a base humbling of her proud spirit which gained her almost nothing in the end except the comparative peace of utter neglect, but with her mother’s death the will to struggle on for mere legitimacy went from her.

The King’s daughters had so far little cause to love Sir Thomas Wriothesley. And now he swooped again into their defenceless

lives, unheralded save by a breathless plough-boy ; and with some great matter, sure to be unpleasant, up his velvet sleeve.

Elizabeth, who never listened but always heard, knew a great deal about this business of Mary's marriage. Mary was twenty-three, and they were always about to marry her to somebody. Elizabeth was aware, with the critical eyes of childhood sharpened by her own ingrowing love of beauty, that Mary, sallow with years of ill-health, near-sighted, harsh-voiced, pinched and drawn with worry and grief during her mother's long martyrdom, would not make at best a lovely bride. Elizabeth in her young cruelty thought they had better be quick if they meant to find a man to love Mary. Love her ? Well, marry her. Already Elizabeth knew a great deal about state match-making. She was to learn still more before her father had done with his marrying.

It was Anne of Cleves that Henry was courting now. His fourth. Elizabeth could just remember the death of his third, who was Edward's mother. There was a christening at Hampton Court, to which the baby prince's disinherited sisters had been bidden. Elizabeth was four then, and she had walked in the midnight procession from the chapel back to the Queen's chamber, holding to Mary's hand and wearing a magnificent new dress with a train. She had got deadly tired of the torchlights and the trumpets and the praying, but she had still a dimming memory of the white-faced, half-fainting Queen Jane propped up on the state pallet with cushions of crimson and gold, shivering and sweating by turns in an ermine-lined mantle. Everyone knew then that the Queen had almost died at Edward's birth, and the huge King, sitting beside the pallet, was very tender in his boisterous way, while his wife held his hand and tried to smile through her weakness and pain whenever he laughed—and he was very gay, for had he not got a son at last ?

And now would they make Mary a wife, and the mother of a son—and would Mary die a few days after, like Queen Jane ? Dark-eyed, the child Elizabeth regarded the simple destiny of queens : to marry, to bear sons, and to die. Would that be Mary's brief fate too ?

It seemed a dreadful thing to contemplate. Mary might be queer and cold and sour, and not know how to enjoy herself in a bright world full of fascinations—at other times she was awkwardly kind, and gave one pocket-money, or a sweet—and often she would sit watching with narrow eyes and never speak—always an unknown quantity, Mary, to be approached with caution each new day, never to be counted on, never to be—to be . . . (the unformed word she sought was *trusted*) . . . but one would miss Mary if she went away or died, for she was kin, and she was usual, and she was, on the whole, kind. Not dear like Edward, whom one loved because he was little and soft and clung. But life without Mary would lack something of companionship, and the stability of her seventeen added years of terrible experience.

Mary was always saying that she did not want to marry. Was

she, too, thinking of that stuffy torchlit room where Queen Jane lay smiling and dying, while trumpets brayed for the christening and clerics mumbled Latin and the King laughed his great loud laugh and patted her cold hand? If that was what queens came to, no wonder Mary vowed her preference for this simple life of theirs together, where the long days ran peacefully into the long twilights, with prayers and books and needlework, and playing on the lute. Elizabeth found she could count three queens—Mary's mother, her own, and Edward's. And now another disturbing question arose: Had the other two died like Jane Seymour?

They said it was Mary's duty to marry when and where and whom her father wished her to. A princess of England, no matter who her mother was, was a match for anyone in Europe, they said—Elizabeth's quickened breath caught in her throat. *She was a princess too.* . . .

She stood there motionless on the hearth, suddenly confronted by her own unfathomable future. Was the time to come when the King's messenger would ride to her, as he doubtless rode now to Mary, with an offer of marriage from a man she had never seen, a man she might not even like? One little reddened hand sought the tightness in her throat. Was the time to come too when she would lie on crimson cushions and see her son come back from the christening—a son like Edward—and she not there for long to love him. . . .

But one must live!

A child, greedy of the vague delights of those shining years to come, braced her innocent courage against the swift, pressing terror of her royal destiny. One must have time—time to look and learn and laugh and do—time to live. One must be old, one must be, oh, seventy, before one came to the stuffy room and the crimson cushions and the mutter of prayers in wavering light and shadow. One could not possibly die until one had lived a life! Life was not long, at best. . . .

Small and frightened and alone, Elizabeth of England faced a world gone suddenly all wrong. With an odd, wild desire for escape from her own thoughts, she ran to the window, peering out and down—Sir Thomas Wriothesley was dismounting in the courtyard. She heard the patter of hurrying feet somewhere—a door slammed below—a call rang out—the Secretary passed within, his attendants at his heels, and his tired animals were led away by Dickon and the grooms from London, who walked stiffly with the cold. Silence lay again over Hertford Castle in the winter sunlight.

My Lady Elizabeth's Grace turned back from the casement with a new dignity. For the first time, with a gasp of sheer shock, she had met panic. For the first time, in the face of panic, she consciously achieved self-control. Sir Thomas Wriothesley must not find a snivelling baby clutching at the window curtains and peeping at life. He would find a princess of England, aged six.

She smoothed her hair, her dress. She stooped (painfully, in the tight bodice) to adjust the bow on her left shoe. She looked about for her work-basket, the treasured gift of Lady Bryan, and sat down

with it on her blue silk lap before the replenished fire, her feet adangle from the big uncushioned chair.

From the basket she took the cambric shirt she was sewing for Edward's New Year's gift—the stitches were as fine and even as Lady Bryan's own. Other people give him silver cups that were too heavy for him, and jewels that were sharp to his tender, fumbling fingers. Mary's gift to him this year was to be very grand, and it had cost more than she could well afford—a crimson satin coat with pansies worked in pearls, and tinsel sleeves—he would laugh, and stroke the bright cloth, and forget who sent it.

Elizabeth, more sister than princess, and poor besides, gave him hours of patient toil—an embroidered cambric shirt, the material bought with her own scanty pocket-money, supplied at the moment from Mary's flat privy purse. He was too little to notice, of course—but the shirt would be warm with his soft body, which she was sometimes allowed to hold. When he grew older she would stitch covers for his books and write out fair copies of prayers he must learn, with coloured initials and tail-pieces of her own devising, to draw him on from page to page. And some day, somehow, she would have money of her own, and make him expensive presents sewn with pearls. . . .

The careful setting of stitches in the fine fabric steadied her, and her first instinctive effort at royal repose was successful. Sir Thomas Wriothesley would go to see Mary first, for she was the eldest, and there was always this marriage business to be dealt with. Poor Mary, she would be upset, which always made her ill with headaches and pains in her teeth and palpitations of the heart. It never took much to make Mary ill.

The nightmarish moment in which she had fled blindly toward the window, an unreasoning gesture of escape from the unknown and the future, receded slowly and left her sewing by the fire, her shapely, unkept hands dainty and sure with the needle, while the early winter shadows lengthened in the great panelled room.

Hertford Castle was in a strange state of suspended change, for the King had begun a haphazard rebuilding once, intending to sojourn there himself; but he forgot almost as soon as it was begun or changed his mind, and went back to Greenwich instead. So now, while round Norman towers and interlacing transitional arches showed on its outside, its inside alternated cold worn stone and round blind stair wells with a few newly panelled rooms like this one, where graceful casements and the warm brown of polished wood were deceptively cosy-looking in the golden light of sun or fire.

The English were learning how to be comfortable under King Harry, and moderately clean, with carpets and mats or just plain English oak boards replacing the insanitary rushes which strewed the dank stone floors of the Middle Ages. But Hertford Castle in winter was a far cry from the rosy red brick of Wolsey's lovingly wrought Hampton Court or the King's new hunting-lodge palace at St. James's.

THE TUDOR WENCH

The King never came to Hertford now, but it was good enough for his daughters. Mary, remembering the hearty Court Christmases of her childhood at Greenwich before ever the word *divorce* was whispered, loathed its semi-Norman bleakness and isolation. Elizabeth, whose blood was young and warm, and who had no memories, stoically raced the long corridors from fire to fire, and often ate her breakfast lowly on a stool set on the hearth, and the bowl in her lap.

Wriothesley found her sewing in the big chair when he had done with Mary. He was not old, and he had cultivated an ability to notice things ; so his light green eyes missed nothing as she got to her feet to greet him. He saw the shabby dress, the tarnished gilt, the neatly cobbled toes of the little shoes, and the facing of a blue which did not match. He saw too the clear, level look, the high nose already royal, the fresh cap, the long, fine hands, chapped and red with cold.

All unwillingly and to his own surprise, he beheld her with approval, and was struck by a sudden heretical conviction that here was the best of King Harry's brood. Mary, with whom he had just had a most profitless interview, was sallow and sour, cherishing her mother's wrongs and her own. Edward was puffy and queer, a not altogether pleasant infant. But the child of passion and disgrace, Elizabeth, was fair and princely to look at, with an alarming candour in her straight hazel gaze beneath thin gold eyebrows and eyelashes so lightly marked as to be almost invisible. And she was Tudor through and through, bright-haired, straight-backed, and ready of tongue.

She made him a long, low obeisance, the blue silk skirt billowing about her. She made him a long, glib speech, with reference to her father's health and the filial sentiments she entertained for him ; a quaint magpie rearrangement of all the drilled speeches of her little formal lifetime. Wriothesley grinned in his beard, as he had been seen to grin at young colts of promise when they were tried before him, and his sharp green eyes bored into her—he was never a man of sentiment.

When he retired to his chamber it was already twilight, and he called for candles and sat down to write a letter to account for this overnight delay at Hertford while Mary composed frantic appeals to both the King and Cromwell. Wriothesley hoped he was not being soft with Mary—this professional inquisitor who once in his zeal laid his own hands on the rack—and he made it quite clear in his letter (which he had no doubt would come under the King's own eyes) that while she might protest and plead for a time, she had already submitted in her heart, with a resignation born of hard experience, to her most benign and merciful father and most gracious sovereign lord, the King.

When the real business of the day had been disposed of thus at careful length, he paused to gnaw his pen, and his white teeth gleamed again behind his beard. He appended a paragraph :

" I went then to my lady Elizabeth's Grace and to the same made the King's Majesty's most hearty commendations, declaring that his Highness desired to hear of her health and sent his blessing. She gave humble thanks, enquiring after his Majesty's welfare, and that with as great a gravity as she had been forty years old. If she be no worse educated than she now appeareth to me, she will prove of no less honour and womanhood than shall beseem her father's daughter ; whom our Lord long preserve unto us, and send your lordship also long life many years to serve the same."

Which was to say that Anne Boleyn's brat was a clever little monkey, and would want watching soon.

II

Poor Mary.

She stood at the window of her room, staring out at the dull December twilight. She wore the white taffeta gown edged with velvet which was two years old and which the King had once been pleased to commend. It had been laid aside during the mourning for Jane Seymour, reappeared again at Easter with Henry's curt permission, and to-day in its insistent virginity it had graced the unwelcome interview with Wriothesley. It ill became her sallowness at any time and now her eyes were swollen with weeping and her dark hands shook against the silk.

Her mother's fine gold chain from Spain was round her neck. Catherine had held it back when she was made to surrender her jewels to Anne Boleyn in 1532, for it was hers, a gift from her own mother, the great Isabella of Castile, and no part of her forfeited dowry. She had bequeathed it to Mary in that brief piteous will made at Kimbolton four years later—she had so little worth leaving to anyone when she died. Even so, it had been required of Mary by Cromwell during their hostilities and was only returned to her now that there was a sort of peace between them. Pinned to her bodice was the gold brooch with a ruby in it, a thing of no great value, but thrown to her by the King in acknowledgment of her capitulation. She cherished it jealously. On her ugly hands were all her rings, including one fine diamond from Jane Seymour, who had been her friend so far as natural timorousness and apathy permitted. A poor enough display for the one-time heiress of England—and Mary took such things so seriously and decked herself in all she had.

She did not turn at the sound of the latch, for only Elizabeth would stand like that, holding the door and looking in, with nothing to say for herself.

" Come in," said Mary ungraciously without moving, her deep voice still huskier with her tears. " Or go away. Either one will close the door."

Elizabeth came in.

" He has shut himself up in his chamber," she said, making for the

fire, for the corridors were frosty in the twilight. "And one of his men is saddling for London. They say he writes a message for the King."

Mary went on looking wretched and made no reply. The same man must carry letters from herself as well, which were still unwritten.

"What does he want now?" inquired Elizabeth, warming her back at the hearth.

Mary sniffled instead of answering. Her mind was busy with futile phrases—"Most humbly prostrate before the feet of your most excellent Majesty—humbly beseeching your Highness to consider that I am a woman and your child—trusting in your Grace's mercy, which you have always used as much or more than any Prince christened—I beseech your Grace to have pity and compassion on your sorrowful daughter—" Chapuys, the imperial ambassador, discreet, all-seeing, quickwitted Chapuys, was temporarily absent from England. She had long regarded him as her only friend and well-wisher short of her mother's nephew the Emperor Charles V himself, who was wellnigh as distant and enigmatic as God. If Chapuys had but been at Court he might have smuggled a warning to her of this new move on the matrimonial chessboard. Instead of which she had been taken cruelly unawares. There was no one in all her world of Church or State to advise her to-night; no one to encourage her helpless, hopeless rebellion against this persistent persecution.

Elizabeth, who had turned a corner that day, though Mary did not know it, stood watching her with real commiseration. She had guessed right, then. It was a marriage. They seemed to think of nothing else at Court. Even the King her father—she had heard things, about a princess of Cleves. . . .

"I will not marry a Protestant!" cried Mary desperately into the winter twilight, and wept again.

"I will not marry anybody," remarked Elizabeth, and in those few words she called a tune which empires would dance to during another fifty years.

Mary, who had tried it on Wriothesley that very afternoon and made no impression, meant to smile with a superior wisdom, and made a miserable failure of that. She turned her aching, near-sighted eyes to the window again, and wished that Elizabeth would go away.

"Who is it this time?" the small clear voice from the hearth pursued presently.

"Oh—a kinsman of the Flemish woman the King thinks to marry."

"Princess of Cleves," nodded Elizabeth.

"Princess!" Mary roused herself to scorn. "Protestant!"

Even at six Elizabeth refused to be drawn into theological controversy.

"Is he handsome?" was what she wanted to know, for even at six she had an eye for a well-made man.

"What does that matter?" muttered Mary wearily.

"It makes a difference," Elizabeth stated primly.

"Ay—to you it would!" sneered Mary, who was feeling faint and sick and full of spleen.

She eyed the handsome child before her with resentment, seized anew by her spasmodic envy of Elizabeth's health and spirit, and her gay, cocksure ways. All the things which Mary, prematurely faded, passionately virgin, passionately Catholic, set her face against, Elizabeth was, incarnate. And blackest sin of all, she was congenitally light-minded, child of a vain and frivolous mother.

"Perhaps if a man were *very* handsome—" wavered Elizabeth, even as she was to waver wistfully all her life.

"Ay, your time will come for that, I dare say—like Anne Boleyn's!" Mary answered tartly.

Elizabeth regarded her from the hearth with a steady, limpid, uncomprehending gaze, and Mary bit her lip. Except when she was overwrought or goaded, and in spite of herself and Anne Boleyn, she was fond of Elizabeth, who was always so disarmingly ready to love her in return.

"The Duke of Bavaria is a heretic and I will not have him," she reiterated sullenly, and turned away to the window.

Elizabeth was pondering. *Anne Boleyn*. More than once she had heard the name like that—slightly, or uttered with a laugh, or with a glance at herself who was not listening. Whereas of Jane Seymour they said "her Majesty." Yet both were Queen and both were dead. Jane Seymour had been the mother of a prince. Was that the difference? Elizabeth thought not. Her acute mind, already schooled to the rudiments of Latin and to unchildlike reasoning, was suddenly directed on a hitherto neglected problem and worked round it patiently, until a subconscious impression emerged: *Nobody liked Anne Boleyn*. She discovered it with surprise and a quickened interest. Why?

"Was my mother beautiful?" she inquired next, prompted by her terrible, unchildlike logic.

At that Mary laughed once, harshly.

"Ask the King!" she said. And lower, at the window—"Ask he men who died for her!"

"Died—? What men?"

Elizabeth approached the stiff white figure which showed pearly in the dusk, for the candles had not been brought. Mary turned to watch her come, and Mary's neat, close teeth were set on her underlip. She saw clearly that it was in her power now to wound deeply this small, erect creature, so buoyant, so wilfully lovable, who sometimes annoyed her to distraction simply by being alive. Elizabeth did not know the story of Anne Boleyn—and until Elizabeth knew, Mary had a cruel advantage.

She hugged it to her silently. Could Elizabeth be made to understand at her age the disgrace of Anne Boleyn? The block she could understand—the headsman's sword, But the reason? What would

the shameful charge of faithlessness to the King's bed convey to Elizabeth at six?

Mary, deliberating darkly now, Elizabeth's innocence in one hand and her own long score against Anne Boleyn in the other; Mary, not quite herself with all this bother of Wriothesley's about a Protestant marriage; Mary, victim of a distorted youth and a nervous system that gave her no peace ever; Mary, not naturally merciless, but driven always by furies, vacillated toward forbearance.

"What men?" repeated Elizabeth, looking at her gravely through the dusk.

"Her lovers." Mary dismissed them with a shrug. Some other time, perhaps, that story could be told. But now she was tired, and there was that letter to write to the King.

"Lovers." Elizabeth tried the word on her tongue. She had heard it before. It had a pleasant taste.

"Ay, more than one, you may be sure! And they died, the fools, in agony, rather than confess!"

Elizabeth, groping among these mysteries with an odd, growing breathlessness, was inclined to think that rather splendid of them. The reason for it was not clear to her. Confess what?

"No woman but a wanton could cast such a spell!" pursued Mary, lashed on by her twitching nerves against her will. "Witchcraft, some said. Bah! 'Twas sheer wantonness! She could never see a pretty man but she must tempt him! Her very musicians must be sweet to the eye as well as the ear!"

Most of all this of necessity passed Elizabeth by. She had never heard of Smeaton, the base-born lute-player, who screamed wholesale confessions under torture while his betters went to the block in loyal silence. She liked a pretty man herself, and saw no harm in that. But the venom behind Mary's words was plain enough, though it puzzled rather than angered her.

She had scarcely seen Anne Boleyn within the limits of her small memory. She was not a romancing child, and being ignorant of maternal love herself she was inclined to discount Mary's torment of devotion to the unhappy memory of Catherine of Aragon. But the first ten years of Mary's life had been passed in a united household, learning Latin from her mother, cossetted and petted by Henry, who regarded her as his "pearl of the world" before the desire for a son and the love of Anne Boleyn became a madness in him. Mary had been the idol of the Court; her baby accomplishments were shown off to complacent visiting ambassadors; she was for a time betrothed to the Emperor himself; she was made Princess of Wales with her own establishment at Ludlow and her own badge on the blue and green livery of her servants; and her adored mother moved wisely through her days, smiling and kind and proud, tactfully blind to Henry's passing fancies, secure in his deep-rooted affection for herself. That was before Anne Boleyn came back from France, with all the tricks of Francis I's gallant court at her finger-tips. And finally it was Elizabeth's turn to be Princess of Wales and Mary counted for nothing; but before Henry's

second daughter was old enough to know what it was they robbed her of, she, too, was outcast, and Anne Boleyn's headless body was bundled into an old elm chest where arrows had been stored, and hastily put away in the Tower church. They stood level after that, these two. But Mary had come first.

All this fuss about mothers, complained Elizabeth inwardly. Edward had none either. Lots of people's mothers died. But Mary was being unpleasant about Anne Boleyn, and as she was always being unpleasant about something, the child struck back idly with the first retort she could lay tongue to.

"I have heard it said," remarked Elizabeth, who never listened, "that Queen Catherine's confessor was a likely young man, too!"

The effect of that dead name was wholly uncalculated. Quite by chance she had hit upon an ugly allegation, revived at the time of the divorce, which lived on the tongues of waiting-women still; young Diego, the coarse Franciscan monk who had achieved a presumptuous intimacy with Catherine during the long, wretched years of her young widowhood, and maintained it even after her marriage to Henry in the early days of his reign.

Mary was upon her in a swish of white taffeta. Mary's pale lips drew across her small close teeth. And Mary's ringed hand cracked smartly on the astonished face of my Lady Elizabeth's Grace.

"*You—bastard!*!"

Elizabeth took the blow incredulously, standing where it left her, one cheek reddening. Matters had suddenly leaped the bounds of even her precocity. What had she said? And what had Mary said?

She had heard that word, too, before to-day, and her queer, retentive mind supplied the incomprehensible context instinctively. It meant the children of those casual, careless amours of the Court which were so openly discussed in the absence of the principals. There was always a scramble, usually on the mother's part, to provide an inheritance for them—it they were girls it was difficult to marry them off—whereas she herself was the King's daughter, her hurrying thoughts reminded her, and a match for any prince in Europe—her mother had been Queen—but what had Mary said?

She stood staring, her pink mouth slightly ajar, one cheek flaming.

Mary had dealt the blow midway of her swift passage toward an inner room. She turned, the latch in one hand, the other laid above her labouring heart, the defacing shadow of her lifelong tragedy across her vanished youth. She looked an old, worn woman in the virgin gown.

"Never lay your impudent tongue to that name again!" she said, and the words were thick with her smothering anger. "You're Anne Boleyn's brat, that's plain enough—but God only knows who begot you!"

This was basest calumny for idle slander. Mary had heard much malicious chatter in the ante-rooms during her unwilling attendance at Elizabeth's birth. Anne Boleyn in her growing arrogance

was already unpopular, and the gossiping Court, awaiting her delivery, whetted its tongue on her defenceless reputation. But the King never doubted in his soul that his second queen's first-born was his own child. As Elizabeth grew and her narrow back straightened royally and her hair shone Tudor gold round her cap, he was seen to view her with a grudging paternal pride. She cast down her eyes before him and made her glib speeches—but when her parrot talk was all used up and she must speak for herself she sometimes drew from him great roars of Jovian laughter. Once he set her on his knee—his good one, while his other leg remained outstretched upon a chair—and fed her sweets, and called her “Bess” and his “little red wench,” and said she must be properly taught, with Edward; and once he carried her on his shoulder into the long gallery at Whitehall and drew the attention of the assembled Court to the likeness she bore already to the portrait of grandfather Henry VII; whereat she looked down her long nose demurely and managed not to fidget, and there was much laughter and marzipan and a sip of wine from the King's own glass. Dismissed at last, she was very sick from the sweet, but great was her admiration thenceforth for the big loud man with the sore leg who was the King, her father. And remembering dimly, she hoped one day to see again that painting of the grim old man she was said to resemble.

When Mary threw that taunt it was Anne Boleyn she aimed at, not the gazing child in the middle of the dusky room; wanton Anne Boleyn, who had snatched the King's roving fancy from Queen Catherine, and had paid for her crown with her head. Even while she spoke, Mary knew that the woman who had held the King dangling for seven long years and broken Wolsey in her triumph was no fool, to take a chance with her child. Vain she was, haughty, and ambitious beyond any scruple—but not stupid. Only a witless woman would have risked the heir of England to a treasonable love—and Anne Boleyn was never that.

But having thrown the blackest mud possible, Mary swished through the door and banged it after her. As usual, Elizabeth seemed to have won, when she had done nothing to win. As usual, Mary felt herself in the wrong. One's self-respect is bound to suffer in scoring off a child. It is the defencelessness of a child which puts one always in the wrong; and Elizabeth, for all her disciplined, logical brain, was defenceless in her pitiful lack of mere years. She had not cried out, nor made to strike back. She had only stood and stared, weaponless, but armoured in innocence. So Mary hated her anew. But she hated herself still more.

Excitement always brought an unbecoming colour to her face—in her childhood an engaging flush, for her complexion had once been as clear and fine as Elizabeth's own. But now the dark congestion which clouded her pallor made her ugly, and her temper was always bad.

Breathing quickly, following with an impatient hand the pain which flowed unceasingly through heart, jaws, and head, she shouted angrily for lights and snatched up a pen. Her fingers

were shaking. She had wasted precious time. She would have to hurry about the letters. . . . “*In as humble and lowly a manner as it is possible for a child to use to her father and sovereign Lord, I beseech your Grace . . .*”

The quill spluttered unsteadily on—no long pauses for measured thought or the turning of phrases—the letter to the King wrote itself desperately, poured out more spontaneously than prayer. And always before her aching eyes, bent close above the page in the candlelight, glimmered faintly a face not the King’s—a long, kind face, with unemotional lips and the clear, far-focused gaze of the seer.

She had been fourteen when Reginald Pole left England, and he was a man of thirty then, who thought her a child. There was a French marriage afoot for her at that time, while she adored him with all the passionate secretiveness of her hot inheritance. He hardly noticed her, though they were often together in her mother’s household during that troubrous year of 1530 when the storm clouds were gathering round Catherine of Aragon. Her mother and his mother, friends since Catherine’s lonely girlhood, dreamed of a match between their children. But his open partisanship for Catherine’s cause banished him to Italy and eventually destroyed his whole family in England. Very soon all her devotion was dedicated to her mother in her crowding sorrows, and the bleak decade which followed stilled forever the immature fever of that first and only romance.

There was a price upon his head in England now. She would never see him again. No doubt he had forgotten her entirely; a quiet slip of a girl with long, tawny hair, worshipping him from corners. They said he was almost more Italian than English now; they said he would take holy orders in Rome. And with that news, her childhood adoration of her mother’s exiled champion had become transfigured, however much such a comparison would have shocked her, into a memory, a distant fidelity, as pure and cold as a nun’s pale passion for her Saviour.

“. . . remembering how by the laws of God and nature I am bound to be in this and all other things obedient to your Grace, though I might by frailty be induced in this so weighty a thing to cast many doubts . . .”

Her pen scraped on, headlong, in the candlelight. The world was pressing in upon her cruelly once more, with a marriage which menaced her religion; and once more she saw in her extremity without hope or regret or any emotion the calm, mild face of Reginald Pole, forever unaware.

III

For a moment Elizabeth regarded the closed door gravely. Then she turned in her tracks and made her way to where Lady Bryan sat at a great oak table under a branching candelabra, likewise writing a letter.

Elizabeth leaned on the far corner of the table, careful not to joggle, and waited for Lady Bryan's attention. It was not forthcoming. Lady Bryan composed her own version of Wriothesley's visit for Cromwell's private eye.

At last—

"Mary called me bastard," said Elizabeth quietly. She was not bearing tales. She merely stated an incomprehensible fact for what it might be worth.

"Tck-tck," said Lady Bryan through the scratch of her pen. "Never mind—she's tired to-night."

Elizabeth stood rooted, her long chin held high against the queer, sick thudding of her heart. *Lady Bryan was not surprised.* Then. . . ?

Something like terror had her by the throat. But she did not at all understand why she was afraid.

"Go to Joan, chuck," said Lady Bryan kindly, her pen still travelling. "She's setting out your supper in the other room."

"But—" began Elizabeth, grappling with her formless terror by the corner of the table.

"Now, now, do as I say, Elizabeth. This letter must be off to-night."

"But—I am a princess!"

Preoccupied, Lady Bryan misunderstood. Had Wriothesley been putting ideas of her own importance into the child's head, so that she began to demand etiquette at her age? Lady Bryan had different ideas.

"If you were Queen you might command me," she jested briskly, and paused to put out a caressing hand, at once withdrawn to the page. "Go to Joan, I say, and leave me to my letter."

"My mother—my mother *was* the Queen," Elizabeth got out experimentally, through stiff lips.

"Ah, yes," agreed Lady Bryan readily, for she had married a kinsman of Anne Boleyn's, and to this she owed her precarious post of governess, first to Mary during the early days of her degradation, and now to Anne's own neglected child. But still she missed the point, her mind on her letter.

"And—I *am* the King's daughter," continued Elizabeth, getting it straight as far as it went.

"But surely!" laughed Lady Bryan with indulgence, for Elizabeth's rare royal airs always amused her. "Wilt have off my head if I do not obey, my lady?"

And then she bit her lip, remembering how Anne Boleyn died.

No flicker of comprehension crossed the child's grave face, and Lady Bryan drew a breath of relief. Poor babe, she did not know. Doubtless it would have to come soon now. There passed through a corner of the good lady's vague, pleasant mind a question as to how the details of Anne Boleyn's end would come to her child's quick understanding. But it never occurred to Lady Bryan now or later to take that awful responsibility on her own comfortable shoulders.

"Go eat your supper, Elizabeth," she added, gentle-voiced.

Elizabeth turned obediently and crossed the room again to the door she had come in by. Floating at random on the surface of her troubled consciousness was the reflection that she herself would think shame to turn out such a vile bad piece of penmanship as Lady Bryan's letter.

She must take both hands to the latch, and the wind that waited in the corridor dragged the heavy door from her small strength and slammed it to behind her heels, so that Lady Bryan winced above her letter and blotted out a word, with a grimace.

Joan was a good girl, young and honest, and not clever. Elizabeth liked her, for she was merry and kind, but Elizabeth understood perfectly that she was not clever. At least not clever enough to lie. Courtiers might lie—and sisters; already she was learning the hard lessons of royalty. But Joan was laughing and fond, and sang little songs over the needlework. There was a song they said her father had written in his youth :

"O my heart and O my heart,
My heart it is so sore;
Since I must needs from my love depart
And know no cause wherefore.

O my heart and O my heart,
My heart—"

Her father—the King. That great laughing man who could write amusing jingles one hummed at the embroidery frame, kicking out the measure with one's heels against the leg of the chair until rebuked—when next she saw him she would beg the truth from him—if she dared. Would she dare? Everyone seemed afraid of him, but to her he was kind in his bullying way. Perhaps he would like to hear her sing that song of his about his love. Which love? Would he remember now? He seemed to have had a good many, and he seemed not to be going to stop with Jane Seymour. . . . Anyway, Elizabeth suspected with an awful joy that he liked her better than he did Mary. Well, then, why be afraid? After all the King could not eat her. . . .

She stood, debating gravely with herself, in front of her own fire in her own room, with the cheerful sounds of supper going forward near by. The arras had been drawn across the window, shutting out the blue winter night, but not the wind, for the heavy cloth moved ghostly in the shifting shadows from the fire and the candles, and the tall oak chairs cast pools of blackness in the chilly regions beyond the hearth.

She watched Joan moving briskly, her close cap snowy in the candlelight—a trim, pretty wench with a lover, as everyone knew. Elizabeth, standing alone, her back warm in the fireglow, felt a twinge of only half comprehended envy. Joan was not a princess. No state marriages for Joan, no mysterious whisperings broken off at her approach, no privy councillors riding with messages from the King. No King, in fact, for Joan. No sister Mary. Lucky Joan.

Elizabeth watched her, wondering, absorbed in a revelation of the differences in destinies. It was possible, then, to wish one's self in another person's shoes? Almost to wish one's self—not—Elizabeth? Ah, but one was the daughter of a King—and surely that was a fine thing to be.

It might be months before she saw the King again. And he might not choose to listen to her, or he might laugh and pull her ear, and stuff her with sweets which seemed to swell inside—but mostly an instinct, scorned and cowardly but persistent, said Don't. Don't ask the King anything. Ever.

Meanwhile, here at Hertford, could Joan in her happy innocence of royal blood, shed light on one's own mystifying existence? Could Joan, a simple serving-maid, be admitted to the sanctum of one's most secret misgivings, as a sister might? After all, what were sisters? What, if it came to that, was all this about royal blood? Elizabeth's stout heart yearned toward the sunny comfort of Joan's unfailing affection. Sisters took no thought of sisterhood. Why not ask Joan, then? Well, but what? What was it one had to know?

"Joan. What is a bastard?"

"A—? Why, a child born out of wedlock," said Joan promptly, for it was not a squeamish age.

Elizabeth set one cold hand on the arm of the nearest chair, and her pink tongue showed a moment at her lips.

"Then why—did Mary call me that?"

Joan stood still, her head bent over the loaf on the table, her face suddenly all aquiver. The knife clattered down on the floor at her feet, and she did not stoop to pick it up, but stood there above the loaf, looking frightened and sad, and would not answer.

Elizabeth tried again, through the new odd thudding of her heart.

"Wasn't—Anne Boleyn my mother?"

Joan nodded.

"Wasn't—Anne Boleyn the Queen?"

Again Joan's white cap moved in assent.

"Then why did Mary call me that?"

Joan stooped slowly then and picked up the knife and put it on the table—her hand lingered on it, setting it absurdly true with the edge, and then strayed on to set the loaf true with that—in three straight lines painstakingly. Suddenly in the silence Elizabeth's small Tudor fist struck the arm of the chair beside her and her hot Tudor ancestors spoke through the lips of a trembling child.

"Merciful God, can't you answer me?"

Her first oath, sprung instinctively from her parrot memory, but poignant with a child's bewildered pain. Her first royal gesture, truly caught from a brief-tempered sire. Joan stared aghast, and then caught the rigid little figure in her warm arms.

"Your Grace—" sobbed Joan, on her knees beside the hearth.

"Oh, my lady—'tis a cruel thing for a child to have to know——!"

There stands Elizabeth, white and calm, the comforter, while the maid-servant weeps; six-year-old Elizabeth in royal fortitude,

patting Joan's shoulder, setting her cap straight, wiping her wet cheeks with her own warm fingers, saying the foolish words of empty comfort she herself longs to hear. And Joan is young and not clever and cannot lie.

"Mary does not treat me like a child," said Elizabeth, somehow aware that the very intensity of Mary's dislike dignified her beyond her years. "Why does Mary—why doesn't Mary like me?"

"Well, your Grace—you see, 'twas all on account of her mother." Joan scrambled to her feet again, flushed, bright-eyed, ashamed at having given way in a crisis, and longing for Lady Bryan's support.

"But Mary's mother is dead, too," argued Elizabeth reasonably.

"Yes, my lady."

"I am not to blame for that."

"N-no, my lady—" But there was a sort of doubt in Joan's tone.

Elizabeth's thin gold brows drew down. Was Mary jealous of a second wife? Perhaps the King had married Anne Boleyn too soon. She had heard of things like that. Apparently a man was not supposed to marry again too soon, even if he were King.

"How long ago did she die, then?" This was getting at it.

"Why—nearly four years it is now, my lady."

Four years. . . .

The child's slim hands went fretfully to her temples. It was all so hopelessly confusing and everything they said made it worse. Queen Catherine had lived until nearly four years ago—half her own short lifetime—had been alive, perhaps, even when Anne Boleyn died—yet Catherine was the first wife, because Mary was the eldest. . . . Elizabeth gave a dry gasp of exasperation and defeat. It wouldn't make sense. It looked like two queens at once!

"I don't understand!" she gasped, both hands at her temples and that strange thudding about her heart.

"There, now—oh, my sweet, don't trouble your poor head over it any more to-night—come and have your supper, do—see, there's treacle for the pudding, and a fine white slice of chicken breast—"

Elizabeth looked out from between her worrying hands, her honest eyes dark with reproach—traitress Joan—evading, fibbing, changing the subject, putting one off—was there nobody to comprehend the unbearable uncertainty which tormented her, and to answer simply and quickly and truly the riddle of her whole existence and Mary's brooding enmity? She had got well on the track now. But here was another royal lesson to be learned: No one will give a simple answer to a prince.

She made one more appeal.

"You're older than me, Joan—you must remember—tell me how it was."

Even Joan's memory did not stretch throughout the long, laborious business of the King's Conscience—marvellous euphemism for the King's new passion—which brought him in 1527 to that belated conviction of mortal sin, after more than fifteen comparatively happy years of marriage with his brother's widow. But Joan had seen her own mother weep for poor Queen Catherine while the

shameful controversy was raging, and had heard her father name this bewildered child the King's bastard daughter—his ruthless precedent for the word was in all the state correspondence of the time. Nowadays Joan stopped his mouth with tearful anger, for she loved the child she served. But the battle of the King's Secret Matter—another happy phrase—had darkened her own hearth in her own childhood, and vaguely at least she understood. Vaguely she tried to explain.

"It—it was the Divorce, my lady."

That was not a new word either, but it had remained meaningless, associated somehow with a legendary figure called Wolsey who was dead, and a good thing too, they said ; and with that dread and distant European monster, the Pope ; and with Mary's idol, the Emperor Charles V.

"What does that mean ?" she insisted.

Joan was hardly clear. It meant that Queen Catherine had died alone and in bitterness while her triumphant rival's head was still on her shoulders—though not for long. It meant that Mary had endured humiliation and misery at the hands of Anne Boleyn while Anne's power lasted. It meant that either Mary or Elizabeth was illegitimate—yes, a bastard, one or the other, according to the way you looked at it. It meant a new religion in England, with the King at its head instead of the Pope, because the Pope and the King were at daggers drawn, with the Emperor on the Pope's side and the French king on Henry's. It meant that the foundations of Christendom had rocked, and the one-time Defender of the Faith now sponsored an independent faith of his own fathering. It was beyond Joan's grasp how Henry in his obstinate passion and his passionate obstinacy had dared to stand alone, interposing his own stout kinghood between England and the medieval mob psychology of the Roman Catholic Church ; and how in this, whatever the motive, in this mighty single-mindedness, however inadvertent, there must always be an element of greatness.

But to the straight-backed child before the fire it meant simply legitimacy—which meant the succession, which might mean life or death. Even Joan, who had never been encouraged to reason, perceived that here, in an outgrown blue frock with trouble in her eyes, was the storm-centre of England's endless quarrel with Rome, and hence with the whole civilized world.

Joan found it altogether too much for her. She ran to the door and fled down the draughty passage.

"If you please, madam——"

"Yes—well—?" Lady Bryan looked up irritably.

"My Lady Elizabeth, madam—if you could come and speak to her——"

"What is it now ?"

"If you please, madam—she's been asking questions——"

"Is that a reason to come bothering me ?"

"Oh, but—I don't know what to say—questions about the Divorce !"

"Divorce?" Lady Bryan stood up, and Joan quailed. "Who put that into her head? Have you been chattering? Come!"

"No—oh, no, indeed, madam, I wouldn't—but directly she came into the room just now she began it. 'What is a bastard?' she said. And I told her, never thinking—never—well, and then she asked—I—oh, if you'd come and speak to her, madam—she's making herself unhappy about it, the babe—she'll be ill—I think my Lady Mary must be to blame because—" She broke off before the warning in Lady Bryan's eyes. But Joan did not like the Lady Mary, who had once boxed her ears for nothing.

"Never mind that. The harm is done, somehow." Lady Bryan spoke sharply in her perplexity. *Mary called me bastard.* She saw it all now. Some foolish quarrel, perhaps. And Mary was responsible. But Lady Bryan realized in her simple way that Mary or no Mary, it was bound to come.

Joan had begun to snivel softly into her apron. Their eyes met across the room—two good women with never an idea between them how to ease the troubled soul of the child they both dearly loved.

"What can I do?" said Lady Bryan at last, to no one in particular, and moved toward the door.

They entered the firelit room together, and Elizabeth allowed them to approach her in silence.

Lady Bryan began to talk gently, endlessly, at random. Names, vaguely familiar to Elizabeth, but faceless, clogged her sentences—Wolsey, Cranmer, Campeggio, Prince Arthur, Ferdinand of Spain, the Pope, the Emperor—unable to stem the tide of garbled futilities, Elizabeth could make but little of it.

It seemed that the King had had no boys by Catherine, his first wife; only a daughter, which was Mary; someone called Leviticus had warned them it would be so. Therefore the King decided that this was the punishment of God for his having married his brother's widow—his elder brother Arthur, who had died when Henry was only eleven and of whom Elizabeth had never heard before. If Arthur had lived, her father might never have been King at all, and Catherine would have been Queen, Arthur's Queen, though, until her death. But Arthur was dead a long time and still Henry had no sons by Catherine, so he sent her away into the country and married Anne Boleyn. That was the Divorce. He had not waited for Catherine to die, as some people thought he should have done, but the Archbishop of Canterbury (that was Cranmer) had said it was all right. And then Anne's boy baby had died, so there was only herself, Elizabeth, another girl. After Anne died the King had married Jane Seymour, and so there was Edward, Prince of Wales. But now Jane was dead, too, and the King, though he had got his son, went on marrying. At least, they spoke now of a princess of Cleves—but how if Anne had not died?—there would have been no Edward—and if Jane had not died . . .

Elizabeth became aware that the point she was striving for was being buried in words and bootless conjecture.

"But if Anne Boleyn was the King's true wife and was crowned Queen how can I be called bastard?" she reverted obstinately.

Lady Bryan drew breath and plunged on.

Naturally, she pointed out, the friends and partisans of Queen Catherine denied the Divorce, which disinherited Mary and cast a shadow on her birth. Naturally, too, the Catholic Church in Rome objected to the King's new temporal power, and the English nobility was divided between its old allegiance to the Pope and its loyalty to the sovereign lord of England—

"Then if I am not a bastard, Mary is," discovered Elizabeth astonishingly, in the midst of this talk of Church and power. "And if her mother's marriage was the true marriage, as the Pope said, then I am—that—and Mary is not."

Lady Bryan hedged helplessly. But Elizabeth had laid hold of the thing she groped for. It opened up unlimited avenues of thought. It even explained Mary. Mary knew all about this, of course, and always had done. This was what Mary meant.

Elizabeth ate her supper thoughtfully under their anxious eyes, asking no more questions, and was put to bed. And for as much as ten minutes she lay awake looking at the lattice pattern of the casement on the floor while the cold white winter moon climbed slowly.

There was only the King now—she had got from these others all they could tell her—Mary had struck her in the face and seemed to hate her—there was no asking Mary anything now—for a moment her thoughts rested on Sir Thomas Wriothesley, sleeping off his supper in the best bedchamber—he would know all about it, but would he tell?—her instinct veered away from him—whatever she asked him, whatever he told her, would find its sure way through him back to Cromwell and the King—and she must deal with the King herself. Alone.

On that tremendous resolution she fell asleep.

IV

Madame,

I am beset by two opposed considerations; one is, my impatience to see your Majesty, and the other is the obedience I owe to the King my father, without whose command I am resolved not even to quit my house, although the King allows me entire liberty. But I hope that I shall soon be able to satisfy both these desires. In the meantime, I entreat your Majesty to permit me to express by this letter the zeal with which I pay my respects to you as my Queen, and offer my obedience to you as my mother. I am too young and weak to be able to do more than felicitate you with all my heart in this commencement of your marriage. And I hope your Majesty will have as much good will for me as I have zeal for your service.

Elizabeth sighed with satisfaction and leaned back to view the fair copy before her. It was done at last—and very well it looked, too—the letter to the new Queen, prompted not wholly by duty or curiosity.

The afternoon sun slanted warm across her cheek and picked out the curls at the edge of her cap. She wore proudly, to assist the stately phrasing of her letter, the new yellow satin kirtle which had been Mary's New Year's gift to her—one of those mute atonements for unkindness which Mary was sometimes impelled to make.

On her other side the wood fire burned cheerfully. Even with a cushion on the chair beneath her she sat too low at the great oak table, so that her feet pricked six inches above the floor and the quill topped her head as she bent above the page. But it was finished—the first step in her first scheme.

The King had taken a new wife. It was meet that his daughters by other wives should welcome her, a stranger, to England. Mary had already been summoned to Court, because of the Duke of Bavaria, and wore crimson velvet at the wedding festivities, which he also graced with his presence, to her maidenly confusion. Elizabeth had sent a message begging to be allowed to come, too, at which Henry succumbed to a rare burst of frankness. "Tell her," he flung back, bitterly careless of his pronouns, "that she had a mother so different from this woman that she ought not to want to see her!" And that was the last time he ever spoke in public of Anne Boleyn, once his idolized darling.

They had not the wit nor the tact among them to edit the words of the King's reply, which reached Elizabeth in all its baffling brevity. Very well, since her first advances, made through Lady Bryan to the King's secretary had failed, she would now try the Queen herself. If one went to Court to pay respect to the new Queen one saw the King too. And when next one saw the King one must seize the chance somehow, if only one's courage held, to ask him those questions nobody else could answer. Therefore a letter to Anne of Cleves, to charm the stranger into a desire to know and be loved by her step-daughter Elizabeth ; a letter to cajole the Queen into a request for one's presence at Court. And thus the door would open to the King.

Meanwhile she took the riddle of his hasty words to bed with her and conned it over in the dark as long as a healthy child can lie awake. Had he liked Anne Boleyn, then, in spite of everybody? And was he not liking the Princess Anne of Cleves as well?

Henry in his magnificent, tactless disappointment over his Flemish bride is to be pitied a little. He was a child, a big blubbering baby to the end of his days, and now at almost fifty he found his new doll stuffed with sawdust. He wanted a wife so badly—and he thought he knew now what wives should be like. With Jane Seymour he had known a certain conjugal peace, a soporific serenity which, after the exhausting fireworks of Anne Boleyn, he had found delightfully comfortable.

Gentle Jane, in Chapuys' merciless opinion at least, had been "no great beauty." Colourless, silent, placid, she had observed to the letter her chosen motto : *Bound to obey and serve.* Henry had pillow'd his somewhat battered heart on her unquestioning and unquestioned inertia with a sigh of relief. Best of all she had given him a son. And then she died. He was bewildered at life's lack of consideration for the King of England. He did not ask for much. He had a wife, a son ; he would have been content. But Jane died.

He had actually put the Court into mourning for her, he who so hated the trappings and the very thought of death. Mary, who was only five years younger than Jane, went to Windsor in his place as chief mourner, and knelt night after night beside Jane's bier in the chapel, and nearly caught her death of cold. Christmas, 1537, was passed in theatrical gloom. Henry grieved as he had loved ; expansively, pervasively, nationally. He spent soothing hours devising a tomb where Jane should lie by his side when his time came. . . .

Then his appetite began to improve. He seemed to realize that his trouble was perhaps not so much love as loneliness. Habit asserted itself. He wanted a wife.

His watchful ministers pressed the button, rang the bell. Never mind their private differences, their agonies of intrigue, complicated by the obstinate fancies of the King. Cromwell and the painter Holbein between them turned the trick, to the brief confusion of Gardiner, Wriothesley, and the English Catholic party. This Dutch Anne's sister Sybilla had married the Duke of Saxony, head of that continental Protestant power, the Smalcaldic League ; Sybilla was famous for her beauty and her brilliance. Henry was at length persuaded to withdraw his reluctant eyes from their long-distance ogling of certain vivacious beauties of the French court and set his always accommodating heart on the younger sister of the Duchess of Saxony.

So the Princess Anne had come to England, a Protestant sacrifice, as the fourth bride of a man whose third wife had died from want of cherishing, whose second had been publicly murdered on a scaffold, and whose first—well, some said poison, some said a broken heart. The year 1539 died dismally in mud and gale, and the first day of January found Anne lodged in the Bishop's Palace at Rochester on her way to Greenwich, which was being made ready for the wedding feast. Two days of travel in such weather as only an English winter can achieve had sapped the last of her wretched virgin courage, and set her stolid maids to snivelling with fatigue and homesickness.

Henry, two years and more a widower, was ever an impatient bridegroom. He was nearing middle age and had begun to find his own bulk a burden, but romance died hard in the Tudors. He could not wait ; he would meet his bride half-way. Playing at his favourite game of incognito, Henry set forth astride his splendid weight-carrier, among his grinning gentlemen ; nine light-hearted gallants, counting the King, all dressed alike in grey, spurring through the

winter mud to Rochester. He wore her picture above his heart—that miniature of Holbein's, exquisitely set in a carven ivory rose which unscrewed and showed at the bottom a long oval face, long eyelids, and a German meekness of expression in the unbecoming German dress.

In the late afternoon the news ran like flame through the draughty Palace, from stables and courtyard to the great hall and thence to the guest apartments : “ *The King—he has come—the King is here !* ” It sent Anne’s interpreter skittering to her chamber door : “ *Madame—the King of England—he has come—he is below !* ”

Anne sat at a great oak table working out a new English card game with her maids, amid much argument and female chatter. She had learnt it on the way from Calais in the shy hope of pleasing her husband ; her sole accomplishment hitherto was needlework, which would hardly be amusing to a man like him. Of music, which the King so loved, especially since inactivity was overtaking him, she was entirely ignorant. In Germany only light women of questionable virtue made music. Anne had been carefully preserved from such frivolities.

Now the magpie clamour of her maids died in their throats, and the cards snowed down about her feet as she rose in panic, with a glance first of all at her dress—not her best, but she was always on parade these days and there was nothing in all her boxes of which she was ashamed—not the silver brocade, it is true, which was intended for the first interview, and her best jewels were locked up in the casket. She wore a warm, handsome crimson with fur at the sleeves, draped and bulky in the German fashion which was all they knew at Düsseldorf, cut round without a train, and a severe white German coif hid her hair. It would have to do, unless——

Quick steps outside her door.

She turned, expectant, sick with excitement. Not the King, but elderly Sir Anthony Browne with a ready-made jest and a knowing smile which went stiff on his lips as it met her white-faced gravity. He was a courtier, though, and he collected himself. He had brought her a New Year’s gift, he said, kneeling, if she would be pleased to receive it. The pleasantry, a worn-out royal joke which was hoary in the days when Prince Arthur rode behind his father to meet Catherine of Aragon, reached her inanely through the interpreter, and two of her women knelt to scrabble on the mat for the scattered cards.

Anne nodded speechlessly, and signed for words—here—now—as he pleased—she was ready—and she wet her lips with her tongue and fumbled backward till the table pressed against her from behind.

. . . Then Henry, with his tramping tread, and a dreadful silence.

They had not told him she was marked with small-pox.

He found her taller than his taste, big-boned, long-faced—and marred. He found her frightened silly, with not one word of his language at her command—not any of his languages, and he had three or four. And she was dressed—God’s wounds, how she was dressed!—shapeless, with stupid drapery, in a colour which only

vivid Anne Boleyn could have carried properly, and without a train ! Nothing of Jane's winning humility, either ; nothing of Anne Boleyn's entrancing spirit ; nothing of Catherine's smiling wifely devotion. A dull, big German woman, ill-dressed, with a long, marred face ; dumb as a fish and looking ready to cry with mortification and terror.

Henry's snort of displeased surprise and his involuntary recoil was simultaneous with the rustling movement which left her on her knees before him. In one swift glance she had seen his bloated fat red face, his little measuring eyes, his scanty red hair and beard, his unwieldy body—and his unflattering disappointment.

From her knees she murmured a few set words in German—and the interpreter seized and garnished them. Henry raised her to her feet, kissed her brow gingerly, and backed away.

Candlelight might have softened the blow to his high hopes, for candlelight is kind to women. But Anne stood now full in the rosy rays of the setting sun which came slanting through the casement, and she had not the common wit to shield her face from an illumination which could hardly have been better stage-managed for a woman of confident beauty. Henry missed nothing of her disfigurement thus, and he failed to notice at the same time that her eyes were soft and brown, with unusually thick dark lashes.

Prompted by his kinghood and a lifelong habit of speech-making, he bade her welcome in gracious terms ungraciously uttered—the interpreter again, keeping her abreast of it. Henry winced at the sound of her mother tongue. It offended his musical ear, and he said as much ; remarked upon the inclement weather they had had of late ; observed that to-morrow would be fine ; politely questioned the discomforts of her journey, winced again in anticipation of her reply (and the interpreter's)—and soon withdrew.

"Whom shall men trust ?" he demanded querulously of his subdued gentlemen in his own chamber, and flung himself into a chair so that the floor shook. I see no such thing here as has been promised me by picture or report. I love her not."

Like that. *I love her not.* And the thing was done. Four words only, to seal her fate and Cromwell's, who had made the match and who should have known better, or seen for himself.

Henry departed for Greenwich next morning, alone among his dutifully depressed following ; to have Cromwell on the carpet and to bewail the delectable beauties of the French court, any one of whom, he was sure, would have been as Venus herself—to this.

The stricken Council bickered among themselves as to whose was the blame, until Henry, whose temper had flown out of the window at Rochester and never come back, froze them all in their tracks by demanding that some means of evading the marriage should be found for him. They blinked at one another, personal differences forgotten in common calamity. Evade the marriage contract now ? Offend that Protestant bulwark, the Duke of

Saxony? But the woman was here, in England, on their hands. There would be no getting rid of her now. Unlike Anne Boleyn, she wore her virtue in her face. Unlike Catherine of Aragon, she had never been wed before. There was no charge; no shadow of an excuse.

A pre-contract, said Henry. There had been some sort of pre-contract with somebody. There was always that, wasn't there?

The Council put its heads together, gnawed its nails, and spoke in whispers. And the King, big spoilt child that he was, flung out that ultimate epithet—"They have sent me a great Flanders mare!" he stormed, and left them, and the bang of the door on his going jarred the teeth in their heads.

But certain futile gestures on the part of the Council availing nothing in the shocked and unyielding faces of the ambassadors from Cleves, who had come to attend a wedding and would not be done out of it by a last-minute whim of the bridegroom's, Henry resignedly consented to go through with it. "Must needs," he sighed dolorously again and again—"Must needs."

Dutch Anne was the first and the last of all his brides to have a public marriage ceremony—he leaned always to hole-and-corner weddings. And she was the least capable of gracing such a pageant. Round her wedding ring was written prayerfully: "*God send me weel to keepe.*"

So, though Elizabeth's letter was duly received and by the inconsistency which ruled at Court did result in a summons, and she saw the new Queen and charmed her as she well knew how—the King was never at his wife's side. Before summer came, trouble was brewing for Anne of Cleves. For the third time in ten years a maid-of-honour was about to supplant the consort. Plump Catherine Howard's pretty ways and demure behaviour, belying her spiced reputation, had tripped up the King's restless fancy.

V

In June, Anne was sent to Richmond alone; to avoid the plague, they said, but Henry stayed on in London with Catherine Howard, so it would seem there was no sickness there.

The King had found a loophole. Or rather Wriothesley had found it for him, thus redeeming his failure with the dimpled Duchess of Milan, even to the extent of stepping into Cromwell's shoes. Dead men's shoes, for Cromwell was beheaded in July. The old vague charges of treason and heresy served, and Norfolk pronounced the sentence; that sinister, squinting man who had raised no finger to save his niece Anne Boleyn from the block, and was now ready to throw another niece, young Catherine, into the King's perilous favour. Henry disliked Cromwell in the beginning and in the end. Between whiles Cromwell had been useful, and the King was lavish with his favour. And Cromwell, bleating for mercy

from the Tower, knew that all his treason was a bungled state marriage, and his heresy was just an ugly woman.

The execution machine which Cromwell himself had perfected mowed him down in his turn, and Mary, whom he had in his great days brow-beaten for her own good, made no audible comment on his miserable death. She had one enemy the less in a hostile world.

The loophole was a pre-contract of marriage which had once existed between Anne of Cleves and Francis of Lorraine. This had come to a formal end in 1535, but Henry's sensitive conscience resurrected it in 1540, and once more he began to fear that he jeopardized the precious peace of his own soul by living with a woman who could not be his lawful wife. Besides, she was unlikely to bear him children—especially as he had no wish to consummate the marriage.

The best reason of all, which he did not mention in public, was that he wanted Catherine Howard instead. Wriothesley, rattling about a bit in Cromwell's shoes, was full of sympathy and helpful ideas.

When it became clear to her, somewhat belatedly, at Richmond, that Henry had no further use for her, Anne remembered his second wife and fainted dead away. They brought her to, and explained. The sister-in-law of the Smalcaldic League was safe—quite safe. She was to have Richmond Palace for her very own, £3000 a year, precedence at Court when and if she came there, and she was to be known as the King's adopted sister. And nobody would dare to think it funny.

Gradually Anne came to recognize it as a blessing undisguised, and settled down at Richmond to enjoy herself. She liked England, and had grown accustomed to various amenities which the little court at Cleves sadly lacked. She was not homesick for obscurity on the Continent, nor had she any desire to explain to her family why she was no longer Queen of England. In the first place, she still did not quite know. The King preferred another woman. But was that a thing to confess to the mother of Sybilla of Saxony?

Very soon Anne achieved what was perhaps her dearest ambition ; she had more lovely clothes than anyone in England, and wore a new dress almost every day. Could a sensible woman ask more ? Mercifully she never yearned for love. She was not imaginative, she did not read romances, and the harsh realities of those few months with Henry had bred in her a wholesome acquiescence in her recovered spinsterhood.

Only too glad to be free of the perilous proximity of the King, she made but few requests—this long-faced, humourless Dutch woman knew how to hold her tongue in English, however fluently she might learn to speak it. But one favour she craved earnestly ; that she might be allowed to see Elizabeth sometimes, for, she added, to have had that young princess for her daughter would have been greater happiness than being Queen. Elizabeth on her side had conceived an abiding affection for the woman she had regarded in

the beginning as a mere means to an end, and that end the King. By imperceptible degrees this amiable, unargumentative foreigner acquired a modest significance in the country which had so heartlessly cold-shouldered her. During the summer Mary sent a cheese from Tittenhanger where she was residing with Edward, convalescing from one of her periodic, insistent illnesses. The comic edict of the divorce had actually become a reality, and Henry's discarded queen was regarded henceforth as a sort of favourite maiden aunt of the Tudor royal family.

Even Henry bore her no ill-will. At first he had been rather hurt at the alacrity with which the unfeeling creature went into exile from the light of his countenance. Huffily he asked for his ring back and she sped it to him with her compliments. *God send me weel to keepe.* He glowered at it. Catherine of Aragon had put up a fight for him at least. His wounded vanity failed to recognize that Catherine, to her sorrow, had known and loved him in his lusty youth.

But somehow he began to pay brotherly visits to Richmond, until a giggling rumour went round that brotherly was not the word. The ridiculous truth was that too late he had discovered that ugly as she still seemed to him, there existed in Anne's placid, well-ordered German housewife's ménage a restfulness reminiscent of his pleasant ease with Jane Seymour; a soothing absence of domestic tempests where he could bask unmolested, with even his own ill-humours in abeyance.

Meanwhile little Catherine Howard skipped carelessly along the primrose path of the King's favour. And Elizabeth had her own Howard blood to thank for the summons which now arrived from her mother's cousin Catherine—to another wedding feast, at Hampton Court in August 1540.

And there was the King at last, within reach of her hesitating hand—in a high good humour, too, declaring bluntly that English brides were best. Catherine looked down her neat nose at this, and pretended to blush. She was small and rounded and red-mouthed and laughing; a dainty puppet of a woman. The King was getting enormously fat and the ulcer on his leg persisted. She had fluttered for a few weeks in his grasp, then seemed to submit and to be content.

For a while it almost looked as though Henry had got his heart's desire at last. Catherine kissed and cuddled and cajoled. He was more and more publicly fond. When the plague drove them into the country in late summer, he settled down in vast contentment to the life of a rural gentleman in domestic retirement. A last resurgence of his vanished vigour set him riding and hawking again, and if he had not undone it all at table he might have lost a little weight and staved off disaster a little longer.

Elizabeth watched them soberly, day after day, the picture of marital concord, and wondered. Surely now was the time for her question to the King. But when she came to frame it always the infinite ramifications of the puzzle defeated her again. Where to

begin—how to open it—what exactly to ask? So her courage would fail her, even while his wandering attention was focused for the moment on her, and the chance would slide away into the limbo of lost opportunities. Precisely what was it, after all, that she wanted to know?

Then suddenly, before she could make up her mind about this, Henry and Catherine went on a progress to the North, and Elizabeth was left behind at Eltham. When they returned in October, Edward was ill of a fever. And the next month, with no warning except a paper passed from Cranmer to the King, the ugly scandal of Catherine's delinquency and arrest shook the Court with panic, and the King's children were bundled off to Havering.

Henry had married and disposed of two wives within two years.

Few details of Catherine Howard's fall escaped the shrewd ears of Elizabeth, rising nine years now. The ageing King's toy wife, his crowned white rose, had had a young lover—perhaps more than one—perhaps both before and after marriage with the King. *Treason.* The King's ever sensitive honour was touched again, and he blubbered openly over this betrayal of his royal trust.

He wept, but Catherine went to the scaffold, and several of her family and a great deal of Catholic influence crashed with her. Henry's faith in women was an aching void, and Francis I, who had the same titular mistress for fifteen years and only two wives in a lifetime, sent rather tactless condolences.

Catherine might be forgiven a good deal. She was six years younger than Mary, and she once complained to Henry that his elder daughter did not treat her with enough respect. She had had a catch-as-catch-can childhood after her mother died, the fifth child of one of the younger sons of the numerous Howard tribe, at whose head was the extremely difficult third Duke of Norfolk. She had been allowed to grow up on the back stairs of the Dowager Duchess's household among sniggering waiting-women and amorous lackeys. She was precocious about her love affairs under their coarse tutelage, and not very fastidious, from the age of fourteen on. Her motto as Queen—*No other will but his*—would have done as well for any man as long as he could hold her. And she had been deliberately placed in Henry's way by Norfolk and Gardiner in the interests of the Catholic party.

There was a young man named Dereham, with whom Catherine had played at troth-plight before the King spied her. And there was her childhood friend Culpepper, to whom she was genuinely attached. And there were the low witnesses of her early indiscretions, who raked their long memories to blackmail the Queen. Moreover, Catherine was young and gay, and in the long evenings the King was wont to lament his past mistakes, such as Cromwell's hasty execution, and to point out endlessly that this and that had not been his fault at all. She was young, and the King's hand was heavy. She used to slip away. . . .

By the time the axe fell on Catherine in February 1542, Henry

was an old man. He gave up. He got steadily fatter, and his disposition was a thing to conjure with.

He was worrying about the succession again, too. Edward was a pallid, big-headed child of five, who could recite his Latin with the book closed. Mary at twenty-five looked ten years older, her health was gone, and she was self-styled the most unhappy lady in Christendom. Elizabeth—Henry would grin when he came to Elizabeth. She should have been the son !

Meanwhile Elizabeth at Havering thought it all a great pity, and regretted most of all the cruel death of those two young men who had loved the Queen to their own undoing. Their fate struck a chord of memory until, filtering out of the very air she breathed, came a suspicion.

She lived with it a while, and was quite sure—and still she refused to believe. She doubted, and was afraid to ask. People looked at her, she knew, and whispered. She held her head high and pretended not to see. And she lay awake at night again, wide-eyed in the dark, and tried to remember what had passed between herself and Mary ; what Joan and Lady Bryan had said, that night at Hertford two years ago. She was little then, she told herself, and had forgotten a great deal. The name Mary called her had stuck. But the rest of it—about her mother and the Divorce—had Catherine Howard had a divorce like Catherine of Aragon—or had they cut her head off instead ? . . . Elizabeth would shiver in the dark, and pull the bedclothes up to her chin, her eyes staring out unchildlike over the edge toward the dim square of the window. If a wife were dead there would be no need to divorce her—and if a wife were divorced, surely there would be no need. . . .

It was barely a year after Catherine Howard's execution when the grotesque rumour of another Catherine reached them at Havering. Catherine Parr, Lady Latimer, twice a widow at thirty, was having her dressmaking bills paid out of the Exchequer, along with Mary's. This got round. Everyone knew, incredulously, what it meant. The King was an old man at fifty-two, but led on by his delusive hope of suitable heirs and his sick man's horror of loneliness, he meant to marry again.

In June Elizabeth and Mary were both summoned to Court at Greenwich, and found Edward already there. Catherine Parr's lightest wish was the law of the land, and she wanted the King's children about her.

Elizabeth arrived there, nearly ten years old, with her courage in both hands. She knew now the question she wanted to ask. Now for the King.

VI

Catherine Parr was one of those women born to be a mother. Twice married in her teens to elderly gentlemen and remaining childless, she had mothered her husbands and their grown children by other wives. She was an excellent nurse in a sickroom. She

was better educated than most women, and knew how to think for herself besides. She had been born and bred in the Lake Country, and some time before the death of old Lord Latimer, her second husband, she had drifted like a fresh clean breeze through the stale air of the Court.

Henry had been dimly aware of her for some time. Soon after Lord Latimer died Thomas Seymour, that gallant gentleman, returned from a mission in Germany and began to court the quiet, learned lady, so young and pretty to be so wealthy. Henry, who kept an eye on all such matters, took notice. What was their Thomas up to now? Thus he perceived how kind she was, how broadminded about religion in spite of the violently Catholic Latimer, how simple and serene—how motherly.

Seymour was promptly packed off to Flanders on another errand for the King. When he returned in the summer of 1543 Catherine Parr was Henry's acknowledged though uncrowned Queen, and had settled down at Hampton Court to mothering the ailing King and his three diverse children.

Seymour shrugged his broad shoulders, and her eyes followed him wistfully as he moved about the Court in his charming, wary bachelorhood, well knowing himself the most brilliant catch in England. She was not fickle, and she certainly was not dazzled by the throne. She had simply realized when Henry's acquisitive eye first came to rest on her that if she stuck to Scymour she automatically wrecked him. She could not make of the man she loved a successful rival to the King—and she did love the swaggering Thomas with all the starved ardour of her young widowhood. But she was no headlong girl, and her maternal good sense mantled Seymour with the rest. She let him go free, and turned again with a sigh to nursing.

For all her mild differences of religious opinion, she made friends with Mary, who was only three years younger. Elizabeth took to her with frank goodwill. Edward adored her. The King leaned on her, and fairly purred his satisfaction. At last he was a family man, cossetted and humoured by his smiling, affectionate women-folk. His temper was bad occasionally, but that was because his leg gave him no peace. Catherine would kneel beside him for hours applying poultices while he groaned aloud in self-pity and discomfort. He was a noisy invalid at best.

Elizabeth regarded him with a mixture of affection and repulsion. He was the one person in the world she feared, and yet he fascinated her. It was impossible not to recognize and admire his kinghood even in his undignified decline. The Tudors, by some strange alchemy of ancestry, French, Welsh, and English, were impregnably royal. Wilful, coarse, cunning, vastly unmoral, and a coward about pain, Henry was still King of England. Elizabeth absorbed him from a distance, cherishing her courage, screwing herself up. But when he was kind, she shrank from upsetting him; and when he was cross it was as much as one's life was worth to approach him. . . .

They were at Whitehall in the summer, and largely through Catherine's tactful management Elizabeth now had her own apartments as became a daughter of the Crown. She was a thin, bony scrap of a thing, tall for her age, and growing fast. Her skin was white and clear, with bewitching pastel tints. Her beautifully shaped mouth was faintly coral and her eyes were an impossible changing hazel. Her nose was too long and her jaw too sharp. She was not beautiful—but if she had been set down anywhere in homespun she would have attracted eyes. Her hair had reddened and curled by itself. She had achieved the dignity of her own jar of rose-water and cream, and was already vain of the whiteness of her slim hands.

One day they sat in Catherine's little panelled parlour after dinner. The King in an affable mood was teaching Elizabeth to gamble with cards, while Edward looked on heavily, a book in his lap, and Catherine bent above her needlework. An almost voluptuously simple hearthside scene. Henry, who always played for his own applause if there was no larger audience, looked about him with immense complacence.

Elizabeth's slender fingers were quick and sure with the cards and gold pieces on the table. He watched her approvingly. Anne Boleyn had been clever at keeping her left hand hidden in the hanging sleeve she made fashionable, because of a malformation. Deftly Elizabeth guided his pudgy fumbling; graciously by an ingenious miscalculation she let him win.

"No," said Edward, watching. "That was a nine."

Behind the King's massive back Catherine shook her head at his tactless son and frowned. Elizabeth was arranging the cards for a new game and seemed not to hear.

"That was a nine, sister," repeated Edward, monotonously. "The game was to you."

Henry eyed him with a positive dislike.

"Have I taught you the game?" he demanded peevishly.

"No, but—"

"Then mind your Latin, boy, and let your sister be."

"It's Greek to-day." Edward showed his primer crossly—could the King not see? "I'm weary of it. And mine is a better head for figures than Elizabeth's. Dr. Cheke says so. It *was* a nine, Bess."

Catherine's soft voice intervened.

"Bring the book to me, sweetheart," she coaxed. "We'll learn together."

"No," said Edward unargumentatively. "I'd rather watch them play." And he went to loll against Elizabeth's chair.

She stroked his big head with a bright, propitiatory glance at their father. Edward was tactless indeed, but it was never wise to rebuke him, for he was Prince of Wales and presumed on it.

"The cards are ready, sire—will you play again?"

"It was a nine," reiterated Edward, rubbing his fat cheek cat-like against her sleeve. "This time I shall make sure."

Henry pushed the cards away with a fretful hand. His fun was spoilt.

"Enough," he said, scowling.

"Teach me how to play it too," whined Edward, nuzzling Elizabeth.

"Why," said the King sarcastically, "you know so much already!"

"He's *very* little," pleaded Elizabeth, who dreaded the end of the King's midday amiability.

"I shall be six soon," boasted Edward, and he began to clink the coins on the table with an irritating persistence. "One, two, three, four, five—" he droned.

Elizabeth laid her quick hand on the small, maddening sound.

"Where's the tiresome book, brother?" she queried to divert him. "Come, read me your Greek—see, I'll learn from you."

"It wearies me." Edward jerked the primer out of her hand and threw it on the floor, a bundle of bent, maltreated leaves. "Teach me the game, Bess." And he reached again toward the pile of gold pieces.

Henry's great fist came down so that the cards and coins jumped on the polished wood.

"Body of God, take him away!" he boomed, and his chair scraped back, crumpling a fine rug which was the joy of the Queen's housewifely heart. He looked round for Catherine, for his wife, whose duty it was and surely whose pleasure it should be to see that he was comfortable and happy. "Can a man have no peace?" he queried plaintively.

"Now, now, your Grace—" Catherine came soothingly to his side, and strove with a cautious foot beneath her gown to straighten the wretched rug. "The boy has been kept too close at his lessons. Take him out into the garden, Bess."

"The child's a fool," muttered Henry. He indulged in these devastating private franknesses sometimes.

"Hush, sire, hush—but how unkind to say such a thing—and to your own son, too—" protested Catherine with a pitying glance at Edward, who was staring without animus at his sulky parent.

"Come, brother—" coaxed Elizabeth, taking his limp hand. "Let's go and find a rose for Kate—"

"No," said Edward, with passive resistance. "I have had my walk to-day."

Elizabeth was to blame for the rage that seized on Henry then—Elizabeth, straight and tall and healthy as Edward would never be, with her mother's sense of humour and her father's vanished, golden grace. She looked round over her shoulder, and above Edward's ponderous head her bright eyes met the King's lowering gaze and she made a naughty little *moue* and shook with silent laughter. We know, she seemed to say, we know that he is pretty dreadful, we Tudors, but he is all there is!

The inborn, inbred companionship of that bright glance, that confidential laughter, from his tall girl set Henry's old wound quivering.

"Son!" he raved suddenly, so that Catherine started beside his chair. "Look at him! There stands the heir of England." He indicated Edward, helpless and staring and guiltless, and laughed with loud mirthlessness. And then in his scandalous private frankness, and the same fat hand outflung again toward Elizabeth's astonishment—"If she had been the son, Kate, I had not lived in vain!"

Elizabeth coloured up to the roots of her red hair with incredulous pride. Her fine eyes shone. She had had few enough compliments in her ten barren years, and this was indeed an accolade. But even while she stood inflated, breathless, the King's head sagged into his hands, his anger going out of him as quickly as it came.

"Ah, Nan—Nan, sweetheart—you should have lived—" he muttered in his hands. "Not my fault—I swear 'twas not my fault—you drove me, Nan—you drove me—"

Elizabeth went white. Now—now was the time. Here was an opening. Here was the opportunity she had been waiting for, too cowardly and babyish to make one for herself. But this was fate. She must not let this chance go by. What was there to fear? He had loved Anne Boleyn—obviously. Why must her foolish heart beat so? She had been making mountains—imagining things—when he had loved her—his Nan—but a small, cold corner of her brain would not let it go at that. She must know.

With Edward tugging futilely at her skirt, at her heedless hands, more than willing now for the despised walk in the garden, she made a slow step toward the huddling King. Her voice dripped low into the silence.

"Tell me—about my mother—sire."

Catherine's warning finger went to her lips too late. She stood motionless beside the King's chair, one pretty hand resting on his great shoulder, her eyes fixed in hopeless compassion on Elizabeth, who had spoken her own doom. Even Edward felt the crisis and was still.

Slowly the King's bowed head came up. Slowly his wandering, bloodshot eyes slewed round to rest upon the erect, slight figure of his girl. His voice was the mumble of thunder before the storm.

"No one speaks of her," he said.

"I know. That is why I had to ask."

They gazed at each other, and she held her ground somehow. Edward unheeded and uncomprehending, began to whimper against her skirt. Henry wet his slack mouth.

"Anne Boleyn died a traitor," he pronounced thickly. "She had my heart—and she betrayed me. Basely—fouly—she betrayed me. And so she died—as all traitors must die. You hear? Now go—go!"

Again the echo of Catherine Howard—the word *betrayed*—treason—and Anne Boleyn's name. *And so she died.* Yes, but . . . Elizabeth's white lips parted for a single word, almost inaudible against the King's laboured breathing.

"How?"

Perhaps he really had not heard. Anyway, he looked up, half-piteous, half-peevish, into his wife's anxious face above him and his hand sought hers on his shoulder.

"Must rest now," he observed heavily. "Send them away—give me peace, in God's name."

But Elizabeth stood before him, hands clenched, eyes blazing in her chalky face. The question was simple enough now—no doubt any longer what it was she had to ask him.

"*How did Anne Boleyn die?*" The words rang at him, unadorned. And then—"I shall not go till I am answered!"

Henry's answer was the hassock, badly aimed but missing her shoulder by scant inches to splinter Catherine's lute on a settle by the hearth, while Edward screamed. Then for half a minute the King's language rose and fell in a blistering torrent on their defenceless ears. Through it all, Elizabeth stood fast, stricken with understanding. And when his voice left room again for hers—

"You killed her," she accused quietly, and saw that he would not deny it. "Twice you have done that thing—*twice!*"

Then Henry rose at her, with Catherine plucking fearfully at his sleeve.

Never before in his royal life had he seen unconcealed aversion in a face turned toward him, and the face was his own daughter's. Disillusionment was in Elizabeth's honest eyes—contempt curled her lovely mouth—and horror was in every line of her. This to her father and sovereign lord! He was furious, and he began inconceivably and loudly to justify himself.

"She drove me—she was warned, and she rushed upon her death—not my fault, I tell you, not mine!—I was bewitched—for years I was bewitched!—but by God's mercy I came to my senses at last—" He lurched toward her on his bad leg and caught at her shoulder, half to steady himself and half intending to shake out of her the unparalleled insolence, the *lèse majesté* of the judgment in her face. "Ay, I found her out in time, the whore—Norris—Weston—Brereton—Smeaton—God knows who or which—and I had wanted *sons* by her!" He laughed horribly again, and Catherine came fluttering after him, entreating him back to his chair. "Bastards!" he roared, and his hand sent Elizabeth reeling, while Edward stumbled against him and was brushed off, wailing, on the floor. "Sons, I wanted of her—sons like you! And I had had naught but bastards from her after you, my girl—ay, ay, you're mine, you whey-faced baggage, let them say what they will—you're a Tudor, wench though you are! God's wounds, is this all I can breed—*wenches!*—and that snivelling milksop boy! You dare to speak to me of her—to me!" He pointed a fat, shaking finger at Elizabeth, flattened against the door where he had flung her. "Well, I tell you this, then, to your impudent face—Anne Boleyn died by the headsman's sword, do you know what that means?—on a scaffold, in the Tower—died a traitor, faithless to the King's bed, do you comprehend?—and you and your big ways, you're just like her, ay, I was forgetting, you've got all her tricks,

curse your silky woman's soul—you've got round me finely, haven't you, with your card games, and your little songs, and your soft words—that was *her* way always, too—well, no more of that, as God lives!—out you go, now—out of my sight, I say—out—" He hiccupped, and caught at himself.

Catherine's low, pleading tones and Edward's mewing whimper made a strange duet in the reverberating silence his great voice left behind it. He collapsed into his chair again, nearly knocking Catherine over—a sagging, pitiable mountain of a man, purple in the face and blowing feebly.

"Nan—" he was mumbling again, his great head lolling on Catherine's breast. "Nan Boleyn—sweetheart—God, you were fond once, Nan—" He fell to blubbering.

Catherine looked up across him at Elizabeth against the door; the Queen's little guarding body was pinioned by his bulk, her face was drawn with terror.

"Fetch Dr. Butts, child—you've killed him, I think—go quickly, and fetch Dr. Butts!"

Elizabeth fumbled for the latch—her knees were shaking. With a last panicky glance over her shoulder at the mountain of flesh from which emanated such shocking, unroyal sounds, she got herself out into the corridor somehow, and sped a frightened lackey for the King's physician. Then, all faint and sick, she felt her way along the walls to her own room, bolted the door, and crawled upon her bed.

VII

During the long dark hours which followed she told herself again and again that it was not news—that she had known, ever since the dreadful business of Catherine Howard, what he had now thrown in her face. She had known, and yet—he named four men. Four. No wonder Mary had sneered. She felt her face flame against the pillow. Need Anne Boleyn have shamed her so before Mary?

At least Mary had not been there to-day. No one had heard. That was a mercy. No one need ever know what had passed, there in Catherine's panelled parlour; it was one thing that would not go zigzagging down the whispering galleries of the Court, along with so many other private matters which became common talk. Catherine would never tell. Edward was too little. And the King—

Suppose the King did die. She would have killed him, Catherine said. Would the Court have to know that? The King lost his temper a dozen times a day. Need anyone know that this time he was angry with her—and about Anne Boleyn? Passionately she hoped that it would never be known that she and the King had quarrelled—about Anne Boleyn. The less said about Anne Boleyn the better. She herself meant never to speak the name again.

If the King died now, who would rule? Edward came next. But Edward was not yet six. What would become of England with a child on the throne? Mary was the eldest, but the King had said

nothing about Mary. If *she* had been the son, he said—Elizabeth, not Mary—so that it would have been her turn when he died ; and she was barely ten. But she would have seen to it somehow that England came to no harm. . . .

For the first time Elizabeth was face to face with that vexed matter of the succession, which kept Henry company during all those black nights when his leg would not let him sleep. For the first time she saw England as an entity, a helpless, sentient whole, which looked to her father, to Edward, to herself, for guidance, for fathering and mothering. If the King died to-night England would be left rudderless, adrift in the world, a vast family without a head. Of course there was always Mary, with her perpetual headaches and pomanders and prayers. But Mary was only a woman. Edward would come first.

She understood vaguely what would happen if Edward should have to be King at six, because she had recently heard talk of Catherine's proposed regency if Henry should go to France next year. Someone would have to be appointed to rule for Edward till he was old enough. But an instinct told her that if Henry were dead instead of absent in France the regent would not be Catherine nor any woman.

The enormous, growing fascination of this new problem crowded out preoccupation with the sickening solution of the old one. The question of Anne Boleyn was settled at last—and would not bear thinking about. She slammed a door of her mind on it, hastily ; and England's need, England's present danger took possession of her. The King must not die—not yet. Ill as he was, unwieldy, temperish, and notional, he must go on living till his son was old enough to steer England in his place.

She had somehow never really contemplated Edward's queerness on the throne. He was a little boy, her brother ; Prince of Wales to be sure, and giving himself airs because of it ; but a bookish baby still, lisping Latin. Some day, perhaps very soon now, he would be King. It frightened her. Edward could never rule England—not as their father ruled.

If she had been the son. The words lived over and over again in her ears, while the tragedy of her sex, which had preyed on Henry's mind so many black nights and had done much to maim her mother's soaring spirit, came home to her. She knew herself clever and strong and royal—fit to rule, as Edward never would be. Even now, she would be better at it than Edward. She knew how to make people like her, she was sure that she could catch and hold the favour of the mob. Resolve grew in her, breathtaking and thrilling. If Edward had to rule, she would study to rule Edward herself. Her inexperience told against her here. She had still to learn that the power behind the throne is usually the man with the most soldiers at his back or the most money in his coffers.

Sons like you, he said. She saw a dazzling vision of herself as Prince ; herself as she was now, nearly ten and tall for her age, but a boy, ascending the throne. . . . If she could be crowned instead

of Edward, the regency need not last so long. . . . *You're a Tudor, wench though you are.* He had said that too. Was that the answer? There had been queens before—there had been Semiramis and Sheba—there had been Boadicea and the Lady of the Mercians—she must look out all her history books—why should not England have a great queen? She sat up on the bed, tingling. If ever she was Queen she would keep England safe. . . . Ah, but she was forgetting Edward. Edward would come first; and Edward might have a son.

She crouched, chin in hand, while life went drab about her. She saw her own future in terms of Mary's past—an endless, bickering procession of possible marriages; ultimate exile abroad, perhaps, as the wife of some stranger prince; a brood of hybrid heirs and heiresses; a foreign grave. Hot tears blurred her wide gaze. Never. Let them do what they liked with her, she would never marry abroad, even though she starved in a dungeon here at home for disobedience to her father's command. Mary was half-foreigner herself. But she, Elizabeth, was English; Anne Boleyn, for all her shamefulness, was a Howard, and that line was proud of its lineage when William the Norman came.

Perhaps, she wavered, if they should want her to marry an Englishman—somebody young and handsome, somebody not unlike Sir Thomas Seymour—but better not. No encumbrances if she was to be Queen. She still clung secretly to that bright vision. Mary was destined sooner or later for sacrifice abroad. Edward was sickly, he might never have children of his own. England might yet have need of its Elizabeth, wench though she was. . . .

There came a light knocking on her door. The room was nearly dark.

She slid off the bed and drew back the bolt. Catherine stood in the passage, leaning with one hand against the lintel. She looked dead tired in the dim light from a brazier in the corner.

"The King—?" faltered Elizabeth, holding to the latch.

"Better. I came to tell you—better."

"Then—he will not die to-night—?"

"Oh, no." Catherine smiled wearily. "But were you mad, Bess, to speak to him like that?"

"He began it," muttered Elizabeth, looking down. "He spoke of her—I had been wondering—I had to know—"

"Poor lamb." Catherine laid a small hand on her shoulder. Worn out by her vigil with the King, who had fallen at last into deep slumber, she could find no strength now to comfort his stormy daughter. They were an exhausting family, the Tudors. "He is still very angry with you—will be, when he wakes—you will be sent away, I think, if he remembers. The doctors say I must lie down—he will want me—later—"

She drifted into the shadows, a mere wraith of fatigue.

The King had forgotten nothing next day; Elizabeth was banished from Court, and for nearly a year she never saw her father's face. But in January came another Act of Succession.

Dr. Cheke explained it to her. It provided for Edward first, of course. Failing lawful heirs of his body, Mary was to be queen in her own right—people shook their heads over this, for Mary was an ardent Catholic and that meant upheaval. And if Mary had no children, it would be Elizabeth's turn.

Two lives, between the King's death and her own jealous zeal for England's welfare. Two lives, at least, which bound by ties of kin and habit and common decency, to say nothing of affection, one could not wish to have shortened. Brutal reason, for her never lost in sentiment, suggested that they were frail, uncertain lives at best, while hers alone had a firm bedrock foundation of health and keen intelligence. Well, let them rule, then. She wanted time, knowledge—experience. She would outlive them all. She was young yet—seventeen years younger than Mary. If only the King wouldn't die too soon—for England was safe enough so long as he lived. . . .

She was only ten, and banished from Court, but already her beautiful fingers itched for the reins.

PART TWO

MAID

I

SHE stretched a crafty hand between the bed-curtains for the little heap of clothes she had placed on a chair close by, the night before. Wriggling back against the pillows, she pulled on her stockings, exchanged the white nightdress for a shift, and slid out softly on to the floor.

Not pausing, breathing quickly, she struggled into the plain black dress she wore for the dead King. Its open collar rolled back in wide wings, lined with satin, from her throat which rose white and small like a child's. Her long red mane slipped heavily across her face as she bent to the fastenings—she flung it back with an impatient hand and pattered to the window in her stocking feet and pushed open the casement.

The August day was warm and bright and young ; there were bird songs in the garden, which sloped sweetly to the river-bank under fine old trees. Dew shone on the grass, and the air was gay with flower scents. There were many just such gardens along the Thames between the dower-house here at Chelsea and the big Strand palaces in London ; England itself was a garden in summer. Elizabeth leaned at the window, while her lingering gaze caressed the good green land of her birth.

She had won the morning race with Thomas Seymour, and her triumph was forgotten in the glory of the new day. Last time he caught her still abed, and set her squealing in unfeigned terror by his boisterous threats to strip off the coverlet and drag her out. Kate had promised to filch from him the master-key, but she could not find where he kept it hidden. And it was becoming more and more his habit to burst in upon her in the early morning, himself clad only in shirt, trunks, and hose, and pry with jests and personalities into the making of her toilet, amid the half-hearted scoldings of her tittering maids and the amused compliance of the widowed Queen, who was often drawn to the open door by their brawling.

Mrs. Ashley, her governess, had once remonstrated with Catherine.

" Nay, she's but a child still—he means no harm," said Catherine easily and went her ways.

But she was almost fourteen, and the King was dead. Too soon, after all, for Edward was only ten, and a Regent's Council ruled, and the Duke of Somerset ruled the Council. He called himself Lord Protector now.

She had been at Enfield last January when the King died, and Somerset with his genius for staging a scene brought Edward to her all the way from Hertford, in order to announce to them both the solemn tidings. Mary—lucky Mary—had seen their father near his end, and received his blessing ; as soon as he was dead she retired to one of her country houses and was ill. The exceedingly Protestant trend of the new reign was not to her liking—Edward VI was a somewhat prosy theologian at ten.

How Mary mourned the man who had so wronged her martyred mother and made her own girlhood a long bitterness one might wonder, though he had made much of her in her half-forgotten happy childhood. Elizabeth, who had recently known his gay times as well as his furies and whose blood ran hot with his own capacity for untrammeled emotion, burst into real tears at the news of his death. Edward set up a whimpering then against her dress, only half comprehending, but upset by all the bustle and ceremony and riding to and fro, and conscious in his child's instinctive way of some grave impending change.

Edward was frightened and he wept. Elizabeth set her arm round him with a swift, protective, pitying movement. Not even her acute perceptions had grasped a tenth of what this meant to them, but she understood that his world would soon be much too big for his small shoulders, and that Atlas-like he must somehow support it there until he, too, died. . . .

"There, brother," she crooned, her wet cheek against his scant flaxen hair. "There—there—must be a man now—"

"His Majesty will accompany us to London at once," said Somerset, and Edward goggled at him with streaming eyes.

Edward's princely toes were cold with all this winter travelling ; he had been roused at daybreak and he was tired ; he liked Enfield, he liked Elizabeth, he had had a lonely time at Hertford among his tutors, and here was his playmate who made lessons a game. He had no wish for any more riding along snowy roads with this grim company, who hurried and confused him, for all their grave punctilio. And it seemed to him that now at last he could do as he pleased.

"No," said Edward through his nose.

"But your Majesty must be proclaimed," explained Somerset with a condescending patience.

"I am King now," Edward asserted thickly, while his fat fingers tightened on the stuff of Elizabeth's gown. That he understood, at any rate.

"Your Majesty's coronation will take place within a few days of your Majesty's arrival at the Tower," smiled the Duke.

"But I will not leave *her* behind," said his Majesty, and blubbered.

Somerset's obstinate chin squared in his long brown beard. He had no need of Elizabeth, upon whom he had kept a speculative eye ever since he bore her in his arms at Edward's christening. For years he had marked her growing Tudorism with something like apprehension—she would soon be old enough to merit his actual dislike. Something told him she would be a nuisance to somebody before she had done. Not to him. He meant to have nothing to do with her. But she would make trouble, that was plain—more trouble than Catholic Mary ever would, and that not from religion, either. He eyed her as she stood there, straight and thin and golden fair, with her arm thrown round the little King, who snuffled and picked at her sleeve—and he doubted in his shrewd soul if ever she made trouble about religion.

"Her Grace will be conveyed to the Queen's house at Chelsea," he said only.

"No!" wailed Edward, and his foot wavered down in an ineffectual stamp which nearly overbalanced him. "She comes with me!"

"Your Majesty does not understand. It was not the wish of his late Majesty that the Lady Elizabeth should attend your Majesty at the coronation," said Somerset, in the implacable singsong of Court etiquette.

"It is *my* wish," stamped Edward. "I am the King!"

"Hush, brother," said Elizabeth, her fingers on his mouth. She was threatened again with tears. He was so little—and for all his imperative ways he would never make a king.

"I *am* the King," reiterated Edward in his single-minded way, his utterance blurred by her guarding hand, and with much of the assurance and most of the temper gone out of his tone, so that it was merely the pathetic assertion of his theoretical rights. He looked up into her face, confident of her understanding—when had she ever failed him?—and possibly of her support against these men whom he disliked and who seemed to take too much upon themselves.

"It shall be as *I* say," he asserted, if doubtfully.

Elizabeth, with something of his own formless apprehensions pressing in on her busy thoughts, was herself keenly conscious of the instinctive clannishness of the bereaved. She glanced round piteously at the grave faces which backed up the Duke of Somerset—Sir Anthony Browne was there; and her own household treasurer and personal slave since childhood, Thomas Parry; and the governess, a hand to her trembling lips. Elizabeth advanced a step toward the Duke, with Edward stumbling beside her.

"If you would suffer me to go with him, my lords—" She read refusal in their faces, and her young dignity went to the wall. She made no sound of weeping, but her cheeks shone with tears. She flung out one hand to them, its slim curved fingers pleading mutely.

"Beseech you—" sobbed Elizabeth.

"Your Grace, we intend the King's Majesty shall be a-horseback by ten of the clock to-morrow, so that—"

"I could make ready—"

"—so that by three we trust his Grace shall be at the Tower to be proclaimed."

"But I could——"

"We regret that his late Majesty's wishes are painful to your Grace, but your Grace is of an age to comprehend—" his glance dropped briefly to the little snivelling King, "—they must be obeyed."

"My father desired me to go—at once—to Chelsea?"

Somerset bowed his head on the lie. The dying King had made no disposition whatever for her immediate domicile. But Somerset saw that the sooner the boy was separated from this upstanding sister of his the simpler everything would be. Mary was safe at Wanstead for the spring. The Queen's house, in its widow's mourning, would keep Elizabeth quiet.

She knew a lost cause when she saw one, and she believed implicitly in the dead King's foresight and wisdom. Edward must be left to the mercy of these men, if the King had seen fit to do so, and must learn to be a man among them if he could. She could not enforce her own wishes, nor his. Not now.

"You hear, brother? You are to go to London with these gentlemen to be crowned—and I shall be at Chelsea with the Queen—why, look now, Chelsea is not so far away if the Court comes to Whitehall—" She was on her knees beside the child, his big head resting on her shoulder. "Nay, brother, kings must not cry and make a fuss—see, you will make poor Bess cry, too—" She caught his lumpy little body closer and buried her face in his chest. "Ah, cruel to make poor Bess cry like this—see, you must dry my eyes with my kerchief—so—why, how tall is my King!" admiringly, from her knees beside him on the floor. "Dry your eyes, too—now mine again—gently—there—and smile at poor Bess, who is only sad to say good-bye for a time—that's better—must be a man now, Edward——"

She had not seen him since that day, though she was allowed to write to him sometimes.

Things had been far from quiet in that house at Chelsea. First of all, Thomas Seymour had sought her in marriage a month after Henry's death. The Council had headed him off. He dared do nothing without the consent of the Council, and the Duke of Somerset at its head, who was Lord Protector now, was Thomas Seymour's own brother. Everyone knew there was no love lost between them, even before Thomas aspired to the Princess, who had begun already to make trouble, even as Somerset feared. The Duke was jealous of his own self-made power. Thomas had been created Lord Admiral, Baron Seymour of Sudeley, and church lands were lavished on him. He was rich, and he was supposed to be content with that. But Thomas wanted power, too.

Mary was ageing and ugly, though that would not have discouraged him. But Mary was Catholic, and Reform was in the air. The new King was delicate, though he might survive Mary. Elizabeth—Protestant Elizabeth would outlive them all in her

young vigour. And she was a girl—susceptible, no doubt—Thomas smoothed his brown beard—she might be moulded, by a clever man—she might be useful—and she would be a handsome creature withal, when she filled out a bit.

He wrote her love letters—her first—and she replied with unnatural caution, an eye to the Council. Brother Somerset caught on—and Thomas wisely dropped things where they were. Neither Elizabeth nor Thomas lost sight of those rolling sentences in the old King's will which decreed that if she or Mary married without the consent of the Council they were to be passed over in the succession “as though dead” without lawful issue. A disinherited bride had no place in Thomas's plans; and to Elizabeth, just entering her teens, no man alive was worth the risking of her rightful place among her father's heirs.

Meanwhile Catherine Parr was watching Seymour with soft, expectant eyes beneath her widow's hood. She had had so little love, as he well knew; so little happiness. She still worshipped him, he knew that, too. And she was the chosen guardian of the Princess Elizabeth.

He came secretly to the house at Chelsea, and strolled with Catherine in the garden at dusk, and was importunate. He said he had loved her always. He said he had been patient and now at last sought his reward. He said all the things she wanted to hear, and she saw an old cherished dream coming true. She showed him an ivy-covered gate in the garden wall, which connected with a footbridge easy to miss in the dark, and a path across the fields. One could arrive thus unseen by the porter and the steward and all the chattering busybodies in the kitchens and stables. It was not safe, but safe enough.

Her dainty hands were trustful in his hot clasp. Her lips uplifted to his were ripe and knowing. She was no lanky, stand-offish child of uncertain temper, but a woman schooled to love; and she worshipped him. There was a secret marriage, and then mysterious comings and goings through the postern gate in the garden wall.

Elizabeth looked on, amazed twice over. The King's widow—and the Lord Admiral, who had certainly aspired. . . . But she knew already that a princess never lacks for suitors, only for love; Seymour had looked to her for his own advancement, then. She was in most ways still a child, and she could believe that baulked of his ambition he turned now to his love—and Catherine's shining eyes and blithe little songs about the house seemed proof that this was love.

Catherine thought so, too. Blinely happy in her first few months of marriage with the man she had adored for years of reserve and hazard, rather drunk with new security and fulfilment, she was inclined to regard her Thomas's former aspirations with a wise maternal smile. Fortune-hunting—men were like that—but she was rich, too, and she was no child. Thomas would settle down. Men did. Except—with a passing shudder for all that was over

now—except the old King. Well, let them romp in the mornings—Thomas meant no harm. And Bess would not be fourteen till September. . . .

Elizabeth at the window noticed that the tide was high, so that the green bank brimmed. And her eye traced a faint smear across the grass leading down to the water's edge—the mark of footsteps in the dew.

She leaned against the casement idly, basking in the morning sun, quiet as a lizard on the wall. Her hair was wrapped round her neck like a stole, and held there by one hand ; the sun turned it to copper, and her eyes were golden in the bright light. Seymour and his rowdy ways would set the morning wincing in its peace. She hoped he would not come to-day.

A cuckoo's note came softly from below—a cuckoo badly out of season. She waited, with a lizard's stillness, but her eyes were busy among the rose bushes. The cuckoo spoke again.

"Fernando ! I see you !" She leaned out, with a pointing finger. "How long have you been spying there ?"

"My lady—" His cap swept the grass in his bow. "I have been watching for the rising of the sun !" His gaze rested audaciously on her bright hair as he came toward the house in the sunshine, bareheaded, his face upturned to her ; his laughing boy's face full of love.

The page's suit of Tudor green was well cut to his slim grace, and the hose set off as fine a pair of legs as there were in England. A red rose, full blown, was drawn through his belt. His splendid eyes, heritage of a Spanish mother, were shadowed by long straight lashes like a girl's. His dark hair, worn long and curling behind his ears, was in damp ringlets. He was all of sixteen.

"You've been swimming in the River again !" she accused, leaning out above him. "And I begged you not ! 'Tis not safe, Fernando, indeed 'tis not ! Ask anyone, and they will say the same !"

"Because of the eel grass ? At high tide ? Look !" He swept a graceful gesture at the smooth silver stream.

"At any tide, the grass is there, at the bottom."

"I take care not to touch bottom, my lady."

"You are not to swim. I forbid it," said Elizabeth.

He bowed again, his damp curls about his ears, and his hidden eyes were soft for her kindness.

"As my mistress commands."

"You promise ?"

"Your Grace—I swear."

She smiled down at him, satisfied ; more than satisfied as she surveyed him smiling up, wearing her livery, the prettiest lad she knew. But it was a child's smile of friendship, unpractised in coquetry, for most of her life was lived well away from the instructive atmosphere of the always amorous court.

"My pledge, mistress—" With a quick movement his hand

sent the rose from his belt curveting upward toward the window. She snatched it out of the air.

"Well flung!" she cried.

"Well caught!" His words were simultaneous, and so was their laughter.

"Now, by God's precious soul, have I a rival?" It was Seymour. And as he spoke a silver bolt of water shot past her through the open window from the basin in his hand.

It missed the boy by inches, and he ducked still laughing round the corner of the house, while Elizabeth turned to face the intruder—he had slipped in with his treacherous master-key, and reached her side unheard in his soft velvet house-shoes.

Seymour stood and roared at her startled face, the dripping basin in his hand. He was a great strapping man with a magnificent voice, and he looked well in morning negligée with his shirt open at the throat and no doublet.

"Oho, so our Bess grows romantic at windows with page-boys!" he crowed in his ringing bellow. "A rose, forsooth! A red Tudor rose for love, and so early in the day! Never tell me he got up just to pluck it! Say rather he has not been to bed!" His loud mirth lent significance. "A red rose for his mistress—and perhaps she will ask no embarrassing questions about his long night! Yon's a wise lad—no doubt 'tis the Irish father in him!"

His words sowed no seed in her candid mind. Fernando's face had the freshness of a babe's after slumber and she knew it.

"'Twas not kind, Thomas—suppose you had wet him."

"Why, then, I suppose our Bess would have been angry!" He slammed down the basin in a fine humour and dried his hands on the first thing he saw—her night-dress—dropped that beneath his feet, and approached her again at the window. "What, no shoes?" His quick eye caught them on the floor near by, and they were collected in his stride with a sweep of his long arm. "Allow me, Bess—nay, permit me—I am the best of handmaids—come—" He laid hold of her stocking foot and pulled her down by it on the window-seat, squatting supinely to his task—his fingers wandered, tickling.

"Oh, Thomas, have done!" And she upset him rudely with an unceremonious push.

He was up at once and upon her.

"And is this day to begin without a kiss?" he demanded.

There was a brief tussle and his lips landed as usually, anywhere, anyhow, ending in a clumsy dab at her mouth. She emerged ruffled and a little thoughtful from his rough embrace, and his hands slid down her shoulders, entangled in her hair. She drew back against the casement scowling, with a glance round for her women who should have been there.

"What now?" he said, suddenly quiet enough, watching her. "Well, what now? Are we not alone? And shall I not wish you good morning if I choose before all the world, for the matter of that?"

She looked at him doubtfully, under her brows. He was different lately—insistent with his kissing, while his hands lay heavy here and there. She liked him well enough—liked the possessive weight of his hands wound in her hair. But he was too sure, as if—why, almost—as if she were Catherine, his wife. . . .

His love-making with Catherine was not always private, and Elizabeth, who had sometimes pretended not to notice, knew love-making when she saw it, and felt unwillingly that he was ready to try his same masterful tricks with herself. It seemed an incongruity, at least ; it seemed to her budding maiden dignity not quite good enough for her to take the Queen's husband's spare caresses. For a while she could pretend not to notice this, too. But a shyness with him was growing on her, an inevitable withdrawing. Child she was still, but not for long now. And Thomas made her uncomfortable.

Secluded as her life had been, the broad ways of the Court were not unknown to her. Her queer, sporadic sophistication was not stranger to the idea that having failed to wed her, Thomas might think of becoming her lover. Such things happened. But it presupposed an attachment to herself on his part aside from her tempting inheritance. Then where was Catherine ? Well, such things happened, too, and wives were left to find love where they could. But she did not love Thomas—not yet—and she did not intend to, ever. Catherine adored him, though. Elizabeth had small faith in that possible attachment of his to herself. And surely he could not already hold Catherine so lightly as to mean. . . .

She was longing for the brightness of this morning before he came.

"Well, and why so grave ?" he mocked her, and a jealous jeer came into his tone. "Still dreaming of a page's rose ?"

She looked at him levelly.

"'Twas honest enough," she said. "He had been swimming in the river. I forbade him, because of the grass on the bottom. You heard."

"I heard !" He waited, watching her, but she would not be drawn. "Does it matter so much ?" he prodded then. "A page drowned more or less—when they come dear at tuppence a dozen ? Let them swim !"

"I like him," she said defiantly.

"Oho !" he grinned. "A well-made lad, 'tis true !"

She flushed under his eyes that stripped her when she had nothing to conceal and seemed to find what was not there.

"An honest lad," she said.

"And do you set great store by this honesty I hear so much about this morning ?"

Her own frankness left her suddenly and royal caution set in. She discovered with a tingle of something like fear that the lad Fernando was much in her thoughts, to his own danger. She realized in a warning flash that since the King's death, with Edward on the throne, herself one step nearer it, she was old enough, important enough, to matter now in the myriad secret intrigues of

the Court. She, Elizabeth, coming next after the heir presumptive, must practise to protect her friends and know her enemies.

Already it was beginning, then—already her partiality for a page boy brought him to the jealous notice of the great. She was no longer just one of the King's obscure children. She was sister to Edward, and she stood well within the circle of fierce light which beat upon the throne. Her doings were known, her friends were numbered, and those who were not her friends must be dealt with. And she wondered, with a sudden piercing doubt, if Thomas wished her well.

"Princes have far enough to seek these days for anyone to trust, my lord," she said, and looked him in the eyes.

"And must they stoop to pages? What of me?" He leaned to her reproachfully. "Would you doubt me along with all the rest, my Bess—even me?"

"Ay, Thomas, even you!" And she laughed in his face, with a new dread of these strange serious moods he forced on her of late.

"Unjust," he murmured.

"Show me how to be sure of that!" she scoffed.

"Well, there was a widow queen once, out of France—who loved a handsome squire and took him for her second husband. His name—" "

"Was Owen Tudor," she cut in. "Well?"

"Their son Edmund married royal blood. And *his* son Henry—" "

"Was my grandfather. Well?"

"—who became the seventh Henry, King of England," he continued suavely, "and founded a new royal line."

"Well?" she repeated in her new, inexpert caution. "Why this history lesson, Thomas?"

He spread his hands.

"No reason—except—I thought to remind you of a queen who dared to trust a poor soldier who dared to love her—" "

His lips brushed lightly at her cheek, her neck, and she sat unresisting, seeing how his mind was bent, but for the watchful Council. Already he thought of her as the Queen—and of himself? He had not given up his high plans, then—his so presumptuous plans. He still thought of wedding her, and she might be the Queen. But how could he wed her now—he had married one queen already. Queens, too, it seemed, came tuppence a dozen to Thomas. . . .

Then suddenly he kissed her—not as part of a rough game but a man's kiss, ardent and cruel. For a moment she bore it, stunned into acquiescence. But while his lips were still on hers her open hand struck his face; she wrenched away and struck again blindly, at his astonishment.

"As Catherine dares to trust *you*, Thomas!" she said, finding quick refuge in what he had overlooked, and was out of his arms to ring the bell for her women.

II

Fernando the page lay on his back beside the River at the bottom of the garden, watching the sunset fade from a bank of pink clouds. Half of him was subject to the romantic indolence of Spain ; the rest of him, largely his wits, had the eternal quickness of the Irish. Both sides of him were in love, each in its own way, and the state of his soul was chaotic.

The smouldering Latin in him desired the Princess Elizabeth with a hot unreason—whilst his hard Celtic head told him he was surely on his way to hanging. Unlearned in romances, he had only his boy's imagination and his lost troubadour ancestors to thank for those unsubstantiated dreams in which a royal lady stooped to the orphaned natural son of a roysterer officer of the guard. But in his dreams she did stoop—dim, honest dreams of youth, which did her no dishonour and made of his devotion her secret solace and shield.

Wise in the ways of his world, he knew that the nearer the Princess Elizabeth came to the throne the greater became her need of a love like his—and while the Latin longed to die for her in some supreme sacrifice, the Celt reasoned that to do so were to throw away on a gesture years of usefulness in her service. No, he must live for her, guarding his own mere existence as a precious thing because it belonged utterly to her. He would watch over her, during a long and careful life ; the one man in the world she could wholly trust, yea, even to the most secret interest of some other man she loved, or the most priceless affairs of state.

For Fernando, like Seymour, saw her already as the Queen.

So he lay on his back gazing at pink clouds over Surrey, all the passion of a novitiate in his self-consecration. And if sometimes she would give him her hands to kiss, or if when she was very weary of being betrayed by all the world, as queens were, if she acknowledged him then just between the two of them as her one true lover.

. . . He drifted happily among pink clouds.

" Faith, the boy's gone fast asleep ! "

A single lithe movement brought him to his feet, flushed to the very ears. She stood above him on the bank, her finger in the pages of a book. Except for the row of pearls which rimmed her cap she was without jewels, and the black stuff of her simple gown made her seem slighter and taller than she was. More than once he had told himself in his madness that her eyes were level with his lips—and he wondered again in some far corner of his complex brain what colour her eyes really were. She was smiling now, but he saw beyond that to her uneasy soul.

" My lady ! " he whispered, awed, for it was as though she had materialized out of his reverie.

" I saw you from my window," she confessed with her strange directness, shameless and unselfconscious.

" And you came to seek me ? "

She nodded.

They stood gazing at each other, and while she wondered, he knew, and a shiver of delight shook him. He had had no time to collect himself, to interpose a voluntary expression between her and his most secret thoughts. She was reading his love in his face at last, and he saw that she was drawn and held by it, uncomprehending.

While he watched, her look of open friendliness altered to unconscious appeal. Her eyes clung to his piteously—out of sheer instinct she had sought him to ease the trouble within her, and now she found no words to tell him so. She was worried about something, she hardly knew what—and she had come down the stairs and out across the grass to him, her finger in her book.

Already it was beginning, he told himself gladly—her secret need of him and his precious lifetime of unswerving service. Both his superstitious Celt and his devout Spaniard thrilled to this prompt manifestation of the half-vision, half-prayer he had entertained.

His left hand went out to her. With the other he indicated a little bench that encircled the trunk of an old tree near the water's edge.

Wordless still, she shook her head, looking down at his outstretched hand—fine long fingers, well kept—good blood from somewhere.

"We cannot be seen from the house if we sit there," he suggested quietly.

Again she shook her head and stole a glance at the windows behind them.

"I dare not stop," she said.

He paused, gazing up at her on the slope of the grassy bank. She dared not sit with him, she apparently had nothing to say to him, and yet—he thought he understood, and his heart beat faster as the seconds slipped away and she stood half-turned from him, staring at the River.

There had been little etiquette between them for weeks, and he broke the silence again.

"You are troubled, mistress?"

"Yes—"

"And is there naught I can do?"

Her eyes came back to rest in his, puzzled, searching, appealing. He realized with a twinge like pity that she herself did not know why she had come, but had fled to him on an impulse when she saw him lying on the river-bank; fled instinctively to his unspoken love and the quite illusory protection of his presence.

Something threatened her—and she wanted him. She longed to tell him what it was, but she hardly seemed to know that. She had never had a confidant—and now she seemed to have nothing really to tell. . . .

"If I could speak with you—" she broke out, and stopped on a gasp.

"My lady—!"

"Fernando, I'm frightened!—there!—I don't know what to do,

I—" She glanced about her huntedly, in the soft sunset light. It was peace she wanted as much as anything just then—privacy from peeping, sidelong glances, and master-keys. And out of her inarticulate, pressing need, her first intrigue was born. "Fernando—you *will* help me—?"

"Oh, my lady!" Both his hands this time, eloquently open to her slightest wish.

"Go back to the house—noticeably, across the lawn—go now, and stay—I shall sit there a while beneath the tree—and I shall leave this book behind me on the bench. To-night, after dark, I shall come back for it—be there."

He bowed, with shining eyes, and left her, walking on air across the turf in front of the blank, watching windows of the house.

For Elizabeth the hours between sunset and this first rendezvous were full of impatience—and other things. She alternated between anxiety and a sick certainty that she could not possibly go; between a fear that he would think her a foward, wicked girl, and a happy confidence in his unfailing friendship and loyalty; between a dread of being caught out on her way to him with only a tale about a forgotten book, and a terror that the meeting might in some way injure him by becoming known. And she was tormented by doubts as to what she would say and do when and if she got to him at last. What did she want of him, after all? What could he, a page boy, do for the Princess Elizabeth? How could Fernando help her when she could not help herself?

But through it all she knew that she would go, and find him waiting under the tree as she had bade him, unquestioning and kind. It was his kindness she yearned for, after Seymour's ruthlessness; his preposterous way of implying ever so deftly that out of his few months of superior age and wisdom and experience he cossetted and humoured her. Page he might be, but he was the steadiest, sanest thing she knew. Whatever she meant to tell him, however powerless he was to change the perilous course of her royal destiny, five minutes of his company would give her new courage.

She complained of a headache and went up early to bed, disentangling herself with difficulty from Catherine's solicitude. Scymour sat at a card-game in a corner of the long room, and his eyebrows rose derisively as she dropped him a brief good night. She knew that he knew she was avoiding him since that talk of Owen Tudor and his ambitious marriage.

Mrs. Ashley saw her to bed and blew out the candle. Elizabeth lay rigid in the dark, thankful for her childish insistence on a bedroom all to herself, before the days of Seymour's master-key. Pride had forbidden her to change her arrangements on account of his early morning intrusions. She chose to face him out. And now for Fernando's sake she was glad.

When everything was quiet she slipped out between the bed-curtains and dressed in the dark, fumbling at the fastenings of the black cloth gown. The long velvet cloak which lay always across the foot of the bed would have been easier, but with some idea of

protecting Fernando if they were discovered she painstakingly dressed as usual and even twisted up her hair in a loose knot on her neck.

The night was soft and quiet when she slipped out of a side-door into the garden, and the big waning moon was low in the east. A clump of rose bushes grew near the old tree, screening its base from the house. Shadow among shadows, she scudded into its protecting shade across a moonlit space, and saw a hand outstretched before her. Unhesitatingly she laid hers in it, and Fernando's long fingers closed warmly over her nervous ones.

"Child, you've brought no wrap," he murmured, and spread his page's velvet cape around her, his arm laid across her shoulders. Thus, making one figure, they gained the blackness under the old tree.

She was breathing fast. For a moment he held her close beside him, and she felt his heart against her shoulder. Then with one of his quick movements he loosed the cape at his throat and drew it closer about her.

"You're cold," he was saying, low in her ear, and that was all his concern at the moment. "You're shivering—it's a warm enough night—you're frightened, then—ah, 'twas a risk, I know, to come—but you're here safely, they'll never find us—gently, now, and get your breath——"

She had no words, but sank down gratefully where he placed her on the narrow circular bench, her back against the great bole of the tree. And he stood waiting above her till she felt for him in the darkness and pulled him down on the bench familiarly, her hands in his. Still he waited without speaking, in a throbbing silence.

"Fernando—we must never do this again——"

"No, my lady—I fear not."

His answer dashed her, somewhat. Well enough for her to be afraid—but not for him.

"For if they hang me now," he pursued with a smile in his quiet voice, "how can I serve you, mistress, till we are both old and ready to die in our beds?"

That was better. She liked that.

"You will serve me always—you will never leave me?" she demanded greedily.

He moved—his lips were on her fingers.

"I—should not have come," she said faintly. "Already he has begun to watch you, I think."

"Who? You mean my Lord S——"

"Sh!" The name was hushed on his breath. "I'm—frightened of him."

She felt the boy's back straighten in the dark.

"So—is that it!" he said slowly.

"He sought to wed me—as you know—then he took Catherine instead. I thought he loved her—surely he loves her—*she* thinks he does. But——"

"But——?"

"I'm frightened of him," she repeated weakly, instead of all she had meant to tell him about the kissing and that odd, disturbing conversation beginning with Owen Tudor's Valois queen.

Their fingers tightened, and she sighed with relief in the delusive safety of his quick clasp. Then——

"What can I do?" whispered Fernando, sitting very still beside her. "What can I do?"

"N-nothing—I fear——"

"I must—I shall—mother of God, help me to think——"

"No, no, there is nothing you can do—nothing anyone can do——" She choked and began a low, a defenceless weeping, her hands in his.

"My lady—oh, my sweet——"

Freely he drew her to him, and freely she stifled her sobs against his shoulder, wrapped in his cape of Tudor green. They sat thus for all too short a time, until she was comforted; until——

"I must go back," she whispered. "This is too dangerous for you——"

"Very—dangerous—for me," he murmured, and smiled to himself at his giddy head and hammering pulses. It had taken all he had of wisdom to sit there, motionless, with his heaven in his arms. "But worth dying for," he added, his lips against her hair.

"No, no, do not jest! What would they do—to you—if they found us here, like this?"

"Send me away from you forever—at the very least," he answered, which was not the half of it as he well knew.

"Then I must not come again," she decided regretfully.

"If ever you want me again—I shall be here."

"Well, perhaps—once more—oh, not too soon again—but sometime—for just a few minutes—if you do not mind that it is a risk——?"

"I mind very much that you should ask me such a foolish question," he rebuked her gravely.

"I—but we must be very careful—and I dare not stay longer now."

She rose first, from between his reluctant arms, with a sound half-sigh, half-sob, and he slipped the cape from her shoulders. She had no little graces, no pretty tricks—another girl might have left a light kiss on his cheek, an impulsive, unforgettable word in his ears. Elizabeth stood before him dumbly, her lovely hands gripped one on the other.

In the pearly light of the rising moon, her face lifted to his as he bent above her, she saw him more clearly and more closely than she had ever dared to look before—the mysterious shadows cast by those straight eyelashes, and the full, sweet curve of his upper lip. She was keenly aware of his quiet breathing so near her own quick breast, and of the young latent strength in the slender column of his green-clad body. Not a boisterous, blowsy strength like

Seymour's, to rumple and bruise—but sufficient, she knew, to swing her clean off her feet and up in his arms. . . .

She found herself wondering how long she had stood so, looking up at him, and what he must think of her staring. It was as though she had never really seen him before, and this magic glimpse of him at parting, with all the daylight barriers down, must be caught and held forever. If I were never to see him again, she was thinking, I could always remember him like this—till I was old. If I were struck blind in the night, she thought, I should know him again and always by my finger-tips on his mouth—if—if—if I might learn his mouth now with my fingers—

But being Elizabeth, she stood before him dumbly, with her long hands locked together. And he, knowing her for a child still, for this one night more at least, somehow kept his head. He was not Seymour, to frighten her. Not he.

"Go now, my sweet," he bade her gently, "I shall watch you into the house from the shadow of the bush there—you will be quite safe—but you must go—"

"Oh, you are good," she breathed, and ran from him.

He saw her well into the dark slit of the little door—caught one flash of her hand in a signal—and returned in a daze to where they had stood together.

"Frightened," he repeated in a whisper, both hands pressed to his pounding temples. "Frightened of him—!"

His knees gave way beneath him, and with a sigh of weariness and despair he found himself sitting on the bench again, alone. His restless outflung hand touched something beside him—the forgotten book. He picked it up, and set his teeth on a sob. A page boy—against Thomas Seymour.

III

Word went round in the early autumn that Fernando the page was a very Italian for swordsmanship. It was rumoured (to his disgust, for it was true) that he spent hours in the secret den near St. Paul's of a Venetian who taught the new art of fence which was rapidly replacing the clumsy sword-and-buckler play of the massive King Hal's active days.

Fencing masters, a somewhat raffish crew, had taken up very shady quarters in London, where lessons were given in jealous privacy, with a new narrow sword which depended more on its point and thrust than the old blades made for hacking, and armour was going out of fashion. The story of the ghastly La Chastaigneraye duel went round the town—the man who had been hamstrung last July before the French King's eyes, by a comrade-at-arms, de Jarnac. It was said there were men in London even now who could teach the deadly *coup de Jarnac*, a left-hand drawing cut at the knee, most difficult to parry and only just within the limits of duelling etiquette. It was said, too, that Fernando had learnt it, having the devil's own aptitude for such matters—whereat he would

laugh, and once he threw out both hands and bade them observe that he had no sword at all, and no money to buy one.

He wrestled, too, as all boys did ; and the little Breton priest who taught him boasted that Fernando had downed him twice, until Fernando shut his mouth in private. The new swordsmanship from the Continent depended less and less on wrestling and on the short dagger stroke to end it, since the Italians' discovery that a properly made sword had a point. The lighter, delicately balanced blade did its own parrying, and the cloaked or gauntleted left arm was becoming obsolete. Englishmen scoffed, as always at a new thing. But Fernando was not English.

True, he owned no sword of his own and his purse was flat. But in the bare rear room of Vincentio's lodgings where his school was held there lived a delicious Milanese blade, slender and light and of perfect balance, which came next in Fernando's affections after the Lady Elizabeth. He had confided to her his most secret ambitions now, in order that he might be given freer leave to go to London and learn from Vincentio this new art of self-defence for her defence.

They laid their plans carefully, a conspiracy of two. She invented errands for him in the City and gave him a young bay mare of her own to ride, and bore his absences as best she could—saying she needed a ribbon or a length of silk or a new Latin book, which was always duly flourished on his return. People thought her over-lenient about the duration of his stay—one could ride to London and back in a day !—but she remarked tartly that there were plenty of other pages and that all were eaten up with idleness.

Elizabeth's actual poverty had come to an end with the old King's death, for he settled an income on her in his will. But her household was beyond her means, and she was always pressed for cash. Because of the scarcity of money between the two of them, the lessons came less often than they could have wished, and between visits to Vincentio Fernando spent patient hours in lunge and parry with a cane, till the movements of the *stoccata*, *mandrutto*, and *stramazzone* came quick and clean from his hard young muscles. There was an ancient guardsman about the place who unlimbered his rusted broadsword and took good-humouredly Fernando's eager instruction, though he retained a private preference for the good old-fashioned cut-and-slash methods of his own boyhood.

"Too old," he would mutter ruefully when the boy broke again and again through his guard in their secret sessions together. "Too old and stiff, lad—" And never would he believe that it was Vincentio and not age which defeated him.

Elizabeth begged to see the new sport, but Fernando was reluctant; shy, and miserably ashamed of the cane. Meanwhile Vincentio, old ruffian that he was, began to love this pupil like a son, and Italian lessons went with the fencing, free.

At last there was a day when Fernando executed in perfect form against the padded leg of his master the dreadful *coup de Jarnac*—Vincentio's parry came a split second too late—and the boy

threw down his sword clattering on the floor with a cry of sheer surprise and triumph. The pad behind Vincentio's knee was slit half-way through.

Vincentio blinked at him solemnly a moment, considering his youth, his grace, and the strange fire that consumed him. Then he stooped for the delicious Milanese blade and held it out across his hands.

"Take it," he said. "Keep it. You will be great."

Fernando rode home at a pace that astonished the bay mare and hurt her feelings, for she was a pampered beast. Seymour had been at Whitehall for several days past and was still away, and that night Elizabeth came to the bench under the old tree to feel the cool steel and wonder at the precious sword from Italy.

Summer was over, and a wind blew down the River. She wore the heavy velvet cloak over her black dress now, and shivered in the circle of his arm. He laid the sword carefully on the bench beside them and drew her closer.

"Sweetheart—" he breathed against her hair. "See how it all comes true as we planned. See how useful I become."

She was shocked.

"But, Fernando, it's not for *use* I love you!"

"I know—" She had spoken without thinking first, and with those two words of his a silence overtook them while each gazed astonished at her meaning—or not altogether astonished—but something more. Then he bent his head slowly, cautiously, till his cheek was against hers. "My lady, I know—" And for the first time, proud possessor of a sword for her defence, he kissed her like a lover.

She sat very quiet after that, her face against his sleeve, and he waited patiently, only half-afraid at what he had done.

"Fernando—" she got out haltingly at last. "I—it is love."

"Praise God!" smiled Fernando in the dark, for he was young and at that moment reckless.

Elizabeth pressed closer to him and hid against his sleeve as though it had been daylight.

"I dare not," she whispered. "I do love you so—and I dare not!" For she had had suddenly a memory of that room at Hertford years ago, and Mary's hoarse voice: *Ay, your time will come for that—like Anne Boleyn's!* Was this what Mary meant? Had Anne Boleyn known this, too—this sweetness that was pain? They died—Anne's lovers. "I shall keep you safe," she vowed against the muffling green velvet.

"I draw not one safe breath," he boasted softly, "if you love me!"

"Oh, but we must be so careful—I must keep you always—I cannot be without you—ever—" Her fingers were tense on his shoulders. "If any harm should come to you—through this—through me—and you are all, *all* I have, there has never been anybody like you, I—oh, what am I saying, how can I tell you—" She was laughing and crying, too, at the inadequacy of words to

clothe the wonder of this new light and warmth which had come to the grey chilliness of her royal days.

He hushed her knowingly, until she was adrift again in that unreasoning refuge she always found in his mere presence. They parted soon, clinging, but at peace with the world.

To-morrow she was to see him fence. Only a few simple strokes, he explained, as Vincentio's jealous art was not for show. But as Seymour was away they would have the old guardsman out with his broadsword, and would go through the movements of lunge and parry without arm guards or padding—movements which were graceful as a dance.

So there was a gathering in the courtyard the next day. Elizabeth and Catherine sat on a carpet laid on the steps leading up to the great oak doors, with a gallery of admiring pages and sceptical men-at-arms opposite. In the centre Fernando and the old guardsman faced each other, and the blades rang in the bright air. Elizabeth clapped her hands excitedly and Catherine called "Bravo!"

They had no sooner begun than Seymour rode into the courtyard with a small company of gentlemen from the Court, and their servants.

"How now? What's this?" he bellowed, pulling up in large surprise and dismounting with a flourish. "What mummer's play is this? Ah, yes—I see—the fencing master!"

The jest was not in the best of taste, owing to the doubtful character of the profession. Fernando stood bareheaded, at his ease, his point down, his left arm akimbo, the pose of a duellist awaiting a decision. The old guardsman, already blown, shuffled and looked shamefaced. Tactful Catherine came forward smiling to greet her unexpected lord.

Seymour brushed her aside and jovially drew his own weapon, a rather heavy, old-fashioned blade which made Fernando's slim steel look like a trifling thing for a child to wield.

"Show me some of your Italian tricks, boy!" he commanded, tossing his great blue cloak to whoever caught it. "Up with your bird-spit, then! Teach me this new-fangled game of yours!"

Fernando bowed. His blade flashed up in the salute.

"I fear I can teach my lord very little," he said in his quiet voice.

Seymour swished his own blade appreciatively.

"That *caricado*, then, we hear so much about—what is it?" he demanded.

"Like this, my lord."

There was no doubt that Seymour knew well enough what it was. But Fernando executed a *caricado* obligingly, his point stopping a full two feet from Seymour's breast. Instantly Seymour's blade crossed his. There was a murmur from the watchers, and Catherine's soft "No, Thomas—no!" Elizabeth, her hands gripped together, said nothing, nor moved.

The steel moved easily in the sun, then more swiftly. Seymour's jeering smile faded. Fernando's face was set. No one spoke.

The boy's arm was tiring under his opponent's heavy blade. He stood in a sunlit nightmare, with his Irish head saying coolly : "He means to spit you here for her to see !" While his Latin blood exulted : "You can touch him first !" And then his head again : "Take care, the Court is at his back !" But Seymour pressed him, and his arm was aching, and he saw no quarter in the face of the older man, and at last the duelling devil nourished by Vincentio took charge. He feinted, parried, feinted—and his point whipped downward toward the knee—"Fool !" cried his head, and just in time. The thin sword streaked back easily to parry Seymour's desperate counter thrust—and Fernando laughed with white lips.

"Enough, my lord—enough !" he cried, and tossed wide his weapon to end the engagement.

Seymour's point slipped off the narrow Milanese blade—and then Fernando's left arm flew up and he staggered, blood upon the back of his wrist and blood on the shoulder of his green doublet.

Confusion.

One voice rose excitedly above the rest, as one of the gentlemen from London cried out : "The *coup de Jarnac* ! Body of God, it was the *coup de Jarnac*, thrown away ! The lad's a swordsman !" And Seymour's great bellow against Catherine's dove-like wail : "And how in the name of God was *I* to know the fellow would fling up his blade ! "

Fernando stood swaying, his hand clapped to his left shoulder. Catherine ran at him, and her clever nurse's fingers were busy with his clothing. It was not a nice wound, and near the heart.

They eased him to the ground, and someone came running with bandages and a basin. He fainted, and came to silently, and silently fainted again, as they carried him into the house.

Elizabeth, the colour of parchment, had sat there on the steps, her whole soul knotted up in the effort not to scream, or run to him, or weep, or betray him in any way. She knew that even if he was dying there under Catherine's skilful hands, he would understand that she must not move or make a sound. Not even to catch his last word or look could she betray their love to Seymour now. If he lived, and Seymour knew, their game was up anyway. If he died—oh, if he died he would still be hers and no one else would ever know ! He would surely wish it so, he who had been always so much more jealous of their secrecy even than she had been, not from fear, but holding it inviolate.

White and sick and faint, she waited on the steps while Catherine bathed and staunched the wound and they lifted him at last, two grim-faced men-at-arms, to take him to his bed.

Seymour turned below her on the bottom step, and his eyes went slowly round the speechless group in the courtyard, pausing at each face—obviously, Seymour memorized his audience.

"We shall not speak of this again," he said. "It was an accident.

We rode into the courtyard and found the boy fencing with the guardsman there. They were ill-matched. And just as we arrived the—accident occurred. If any other story gets about—I shall know that someone here is to blame—and I shall find out who."

There were only three, besides his servants and theirs, and only one of them was altogether clear as to what had really happened. Harington, he who had seen the *coup de Jarnac* thrown away by a stripling in his teens, had also seen that the instinctive upward fling of the boy's left arm alone had kept Seymour's point from lodging in his heart where it was aimed. They had been spared a tragedy twice over, by a scant matter of seconds and inches. Sheer thankfulness would hold him dumb. The story was never told.

Elizabeth stood passive while Fernando's limp body was carried past her into the house, and knew that she must wait for news of him till Catherine returned from dressing the wound when he had been got to bed. She was cold and numb with the effort for self-control.

Seymour came up the steps and flung an arm around her roughly where she stood, while his eyes probed her face.

"A pity, Bess—a thousand pities—the lad was a pet of yours, I believe?"

She shivered at his touch, and drew away.

"I find I cannot bear the sight of blood," she said.

"Most women take it so the first time," he remarked consolingly. "Kate will bring him round, never fear—he'll live to trouble the hangman yet! I know the breed—they don't die of a bit of blood-letting! You saw 'twas not my fault?" he insisted anxiously.

"I saw him fling up his sword."

"But by God's precious soul, he might have warned me!"

"He cried 'Enough!'" she argued listlessly.

"But too late! How was *I* to know the boy was mad as Bedlam?" And still protesting loudly that rational behaviour was the least he looked for from a man who carried a sword these days, he passed into the house, shouting alternately for his body-servant and a drink.

Harington, who knew swordsmanship, overtook Elizabeth at the door as she turned dizzily to follow.

"Your Grace—by your leave—who was the lad?"

She lifted eyes gone blank with pain, eyes like a stifled moan; so that he marvelled at her infinite compassion, and was to tell his grandchildren how the great Elizabeth blenched and was sick at her first sight of a wound.

"My page," she said.

"Does your Grace recall his name?"

"Fernando—I think. Fernando Aubrey." She turned again with a groping hand at the lintel, to enter the house. "'Twas cruelly unfair—Thomas was too much for him."

"Too much for him!" exploded Harington unwarily. "Faith, our friend Thomas may thank the God who made him that the boy had mercy!"

"What—what have you said?"

Harington looked down at her guiltily, seeing a girlish idol shattered if the truth were told now on the Lord Admiral. He was numbered among Seymour's followers, but Thomas had not endeared himself by his recent behaviour at Court, to say nothing of this newest piece of unprovoked devilment. Harington could not doubt that Seymour had meant to slay the boy in a rage at being made ridiculous in his own courtyard when he had thought to send the thin sword flying in ten seconds. A nasty business altogether. Well, but why should Seymour go scot-free with this goose of a girl who could not use her eyes? Harington's blood was stirred by Fernando's swordsmanship, and he determined that the page should have his due.

"I say the lad had Thomas hamstrung as pretty as you please—a new trick off the Continent, picked up God knows where!—and he refused the stroke! But Thomas lost his temper as soon as he felt the lad's wrist!"

"You say Fernando—had the advantage?" She was staring up at him incredulously.

"Advantage? Mark you, my lady, if that Fernando of yours lives he will be a great fighter and a dangerous man! Who taught him?"

She shook her head, leaning weakly against the door.

"Faith, I'd give my ears to know who taught him!—But your Grace is not well—'tis often the way at the sight of blood—may I see your Grace to a chair in the house?"

"To my chamber," she said, and took his arm gratefully. "I—will lie down a while, I think—I—it was a shock—as you say, I am not used to the sight of blood—Catherine has experience in such matters—" Her voice trailed away with the effort to hold the walls of the great hall steady while she crossed it on Harington's arm, and ascended the stairs.

He put her into Mrs. Ashley's care and went away to think it over. Strange, pale creature that she was! He was glad he had taken that opportunity to set her at least partially right on their precious Thomas. It would do her good to learn that one of her own pages was quicker with a sword than the Lord Admiral.

He found himself regretting almost at once that he had not gone farther and made her understand that the page was more generous too. He might have pointed out while he was about it that that last stroke of Seymour's which might mean the death of a fine lad was downright murder after the boy had spared him a maiming and cried quits. He doubted if Seymour sufficiently understood the niceties of the new fencing to know exactly what had happened—but at least he must have known he was outclassed from the start, and he had certainly heard that clear call of "Enough!" Seymour had lunged to kill, and the lad's quick eye had thwarted him even there.

If my Lady Elizabeth cherished a romantic attachment for the Queen's dashing husband, as rumour said she did, Harington felt

that the whole truth about this day's work might have cured her, and he cursed himself for letting the larger half of it escape her. If the boy died, by God he would tell her still. It would mean the end of him at Court if Seymour traced the truth to him as its source—but she was only a slip of a girl, and there was no one to tell her the truth about anything. Besides, if the Princess Elizabeth grew up in love with Thomas Seymour, heaven only knew where disaster would end.

Thus honest Harington. Well as he knew Seymour, he failed to suspect that the growing rumour of the Princess Elizabeth's attachment for the Lord Admiral was largely of the Lord Admiral's own sponsoring.

IV

Let credit be given to Seymour that he knew when he had blundered, and he was genuinely anxious now that the page should live.

Seymour had had a bad scare, first by finding himself at the mercy of a superior swordsman in the despised new style, and secondly by the surge of red rage which had sent his point at Fernando's undefended heart. He was thankful, unutterably thankful, in the bottom of his shaken soul, that the boy had struck up the blade.

One of the things an ambitious man cannot afford to do is lose his temper in a crisis, and if he had killed the page outright there might have been complications. Seymour was honest enough with himself to admit (to himself) that he had struck more out of fury than out of self-defence—he had not recognized the *coup de Jarnac* and so did not know, nor would anyone tell him now just what he had escaped. But he did know Fernando was dangerous ; he had foreseen himself defeated, ignominiously disarmed, perhaps, before his womenfolk, by a stripling page. His conceit boiled over, and he lunged.

He could only thank God that Elizabeth was unlearned in such matters and therefore could hardly have followed events closely enough to condemn him herself ; and he could pray God, too, that those who had seen too much would keep silent out of either loyalty or discretion. His anxiety for Fernando's recovery was quite unfeigned, even while his fertile brain busied itself with other ways, safer ways, to be rid of him.

Meanwhile Fernando groped in a painful mist between the worlds, fighting his way back to consciousness and life. He could not die—not yet—he must not die. The magnificent, desperate determination ran like a litany through his delirium ; *I cannot die, I must not die, dear God, I cannot die !* And Catherine's soothing murmur answered him all night long : *No, child, no—of course you shall not die !* She wondered a little, in her simple way, at such a lust for life as his.

When at last the mists cleared away and the pain dimmed and he clung tenaciously, but safe, to the rim of this world he coveted so ;

when at last he could see again, and think, and was master of his tongue, lying exhausted, half-swooning, but himself, he was appalled at what had been so narrowly averted.

With his eyes fixed darkly on the square of pale autumn sky beyond the window of his tiny room, he tried to piece together his memory of the fevered confusion of that duel in the courtyard. And all that he could assemble in his throbbing head was the flash of sunlight on those ringing blades, the almost tangible silence of the watchers, his own mute prayer that he might not be killed there before her eyes—and then the intoxicating discovery that Seymour was not as quick as he was. Next he heard his own voice cry “Enough!”—and after that? He was sure it was after that that Seymour lunged. Sickeningly sure.

Well, he was not dead after all. But he had stripped the Lord Admiral bare, and what was his life worth now? And all because of a boy’s foolish pride, to show himself off before his lady instead of keeping his accomplishments to himself as a man should do. Fernando’s soul writhed in its self-contempt. He had behaved like a vain child, it reminded him. He was undeserving of his blade and of her sacred faith in him. Fool, fool, thousand times fool to risk their secret in an open courtyard. And she, who had kept so quiet through it all—what must she think of him? Did she cry, had she swooned, did anyone guess what his peril meant to her of loneliness and terror? It would be days before he was able to be about again. Who would carry news to her of his progress, and fetch back to him one word from her? There was no one—no one they dared to trust.

His eyes drooped from the window and met the worshipful stare of little Jock Walters, who had been set to watch him in case the delirium came again. Jock was barely ten, the youngest of the pages, and had only just saved himself from an unmanly blubbering in the courtyard when the idolized Fernando bled. He had crouched all night like a small dog outside the door while Catherine strove with death, and even now he could not be sent away for long. And so her understanding tact had made him responsible for Fernando’s wishes while she was away.

“Can I fetch you anything?” Jock asked eagerly, coming to the bedside.

Fernando smiled—or tried to.

“Yes,” he said faintly, prompted by the lightness of his Irish head. “Fetch me—my Lady Elizabeth.”

One of his jests? Or a new delirium? Little Jock hesitated, with a wistful glance at the door through which Catherine had passed an hour or so before. There was no one to advise him. His literal mind said that the invalid must have instantly whatever he wanted. And while he would have liked to consult that gentle lady who had laboured night and day to keep Fernando alive, she had gone away to rest, saying that if Fernando woke and wanted water he was to have some from a spoon.

Jock’s responsibilities were even greater than he had expected.

The Queen must not be disturbed—but if Fernando was denied he might be queer again.

"Are you—jesting?" he queried hopefully, and laid a scared hand on Fernando's hot one on the coverlet—the right one, for the left wrist was bandaged.

"Alas, no!"

The long straight lashes came down to rest on his cheeks. He was white, and his hand felt very lifeless for all its fever. Not water from a spoon he wanted—but my Lady Elizabeth. Jock tiptoed silently from the room without further argument.

Elizabeth, an unreligious soul, had found herself on her knees behind locked doors, sobbing broken bits of Latin prayers interspersed with spontaneous supplications to a distant God who in all justice and mercy could not take Fernando from her now. She had been so brave, she pointed out, so wise; she had not touched him, or betrayed him. Out of the agony of her superhuman self-control she deserved that he should live, and he was all she had. . . .

"*Pater noster, qui es in coelis—sanctificetur nomen tuum—oh, dear God, our Father, let not Fernando die!—adveniat regnum tuum, fiat voluntas tua—*'Tis only a boy's life—he has not sinned—he is too young—sweet Saviour, he is too young to die!—*fiat voluntas tua, sicut in coelo et in terra—panem nostrum quotidianum—*he is all—all I have, and I—Oh, Lord God Father everlasting, I cannot do without him—he will serve you always in all righteousness—I swear to keep him in righteousness, in Thy name—I can do that, for he loves me—and—*et ne nos inducas in temptationem—*loves me, loves me, can't you understand, I must have him, I need him so—England will need him—*sed libera nos a malo—*God of my life, life of my soul, King of all comfort, let not Fernando die!—*fiat voluntas tua—no, no, no, let me keep Fernando safe!—sed libera nos a malo.* . . ."

Gradually as she became calmer and Fernando did not die after all, she began to dwell on Harington's astonishing words: *a great fighter and a dangerous man.* Fernando! Her pride of him, already enormous, became tearful. He had won honest praise from a man who was known to be Seymour's friend. He had had the advantage and had borne himself with sense and breeding, so that Harington noticed it, and wanted to know who taught him.

Then apprehension grew. If they perceived already that Fernando was great and to be reckoned with, what was to become of him by the time he was twenty, even? *I draw not one safe breath if you love me.* She had taken too scant heed of those words since he said them, but now she saw, and caught her breath. Suppose that leaked out, too, as those things did. He was in danger enough already, without that, simply because he could handle a sword and was in her service. And if he died now it was all her fault, just her own childish desire to see him use the new sword, to make him do tricks for her amusement like a little trained animal. . . . Unworthy of his devotion, which had brought this thing upon them through his unquestioning obedience to her whims, she burned with shame.

After who knew how many hours, she roused again to a soft tapping at her door. Some meddling maid with a tray of food, no doubt. They were always at her door, and her excuses were wearing thin. She would have to let them in sooner or later, and get through it somehow. She must eat, and face her world. Then premonition shook her. News of him—? But Catherine would have called to her—

She flew to the door, unbolted it and jerked it open. Little Jock Walters stood outside, looking up at her, a worried frown between his eyes. He seemed unable to speak.

"Well?" she queried sharply. "Who sent you?"

"Please, your Grace—it's Fernando—"

"Is he—?" She caught at the door.

"He's awake now, and—" Some dim idea of the colossal magnitude of his errand broke the child's timid voice. "—And he's asking for your Grace."

"For me? Is no one with him?"

"I am with him, your Grace. I was to watch him while my lady rested. She thought it would be water he would want when he woke—but he *asked* me to fetch your Grace—"

Asking for her. Was he out of his head, then, or—her fingers were gripping the door—was he—dying—and knew it—and begged to see her—?

Elizabeth glanced behind her into the empty room—up and down the empty corridor—and put her hand in Jock's.

"Come," she whispered. "Take me to him."

It was the languid, eventless hour after dinner in the middle of the day, with few people about. She followed Jock breathlessly along back passages and up narrow stairs to the tiny room Fernando shared with another boy; but Griffin had been turned out bag and baggage to leave space for that grim battle for life which Fernando and Catherine had made together. So now the patient lay alone, on his back, his face turned toward the window.

Elizabeth looked in through the crack of the door, and then set a shaking hand on Jock's small shoulder.

"You stay here," she whispered. "Keep watch—and if you see or hear anybody coming jump inside and pretend you have been with us all the time."

He nodded, ageing visibly with his cares, and behind her the door swung home lightly on its catch.

She paused just over the threshold, unused to a sickroom, awkward with anxiety. The room had been stripped for Catherine's vigil, and seemed only half-inhabited, with the bare hooks which had held the banished Griffin's clothes, and the empty place where his bed had been. Beneath the window, in the position of her own embroidery frame, was a work-table sparsely furnished with a neat array of tools and a piece of stretched leather. A wooden stool pulled up beside the remaining bed was full of nursing paraphernalia alarming to her unaccustomed eyes; bandages, phials, a cup and spoon, a gleaming pair of scissors, and a sponge. The bed was white

and narrow, no more than a cot, and the coverlet lay smooth and flat above his straight body. He seemed not to breathe, and his eyes were closed.

She crossed to the bedside soundlessly, put out her hand, feared to hurt him by a touch, and at last brushed his cheek with the tips of her fingers. Slowly the heavy lashes lifted—with what seemed tremendous effort he brought his eyes to focus on the face bent above him. They remained incredulous.

“Fernando—don’t you know me?”

His head moved slightly to one side. He tried to smile.

“I know,” he said. “It’s only Jock.”

“No—Fernando, look—it’s me—Elizabeth.”

“Elizabeth—” The word quivered on his lips. His eyes were puzzled still, and unbelieving.

“Jock came—and said you wanted me—”

“Oh, the demon—I never meant—” His gaze left her to wander vaguely round the room.

“He’s outside the door,” she explained. “I told him to watch. Kate has gone to rest. That means you’re safe—she’d never leave you while you were in danger of d-dying. You’re going to get well, Fernando,” she exulted, bending over him. Once more her fingers touched his face, and retreated to the pillow. “Does it hurt?”

“Not now.”

With another tremendous effort he lifted his right hand from the coverlet—the unbandaged one. She caught it carefully between her own and went to her knees beside the bed, sobbing against his fingers. He felt the hot trickle of her tears with a wise smile—it would do her good to cry, now that he would get well. Let her have it out, now that there was nothing to cry about. Nothing, he corrected himself conscientiously, unless one counted the still formless menace of Seymour’s certain enmity. Time enough for that later.

“There,” he said, when she was quieter. “That’s all over now—dry your eyes on the coverlet, child, and let me look at you.”

Absurdly she did as he bade her, guarding his hand in one of hers, and gave him a watery smile. They had no longer any thought of time or of the waiting Jock, or of anything but each other.

“To have you here,” he said, with a glance round at the little chamber which was only half his. “To think of you here—ah, but you live here—in my heart. So now you know what it looks like—in my heart.”

Her eyes followed his round the room. This was a part of the house quite unfamiliar to her. It had never occurred to her till now to wonder how or where he lived. He was Fernando—immaculate, green-clad, never beyond call. The stark simplicity of his quarters pinched her heart. It was from this that he emerged each day to serve her.

“What’s that?” She indicated the work-table and its scant tools. “Are those your things? Are you making something?”

"Go and look," he told her. "It was meant for you—but heaven knows when you will have it now, with this arm of mine."

Shy of his belongings, but curious, she approached the table. Pinned to a board was the bit of leather, less than a foot square; beside it lay a sketch on a scrap of parchment which helped her to understand—a design of squares within squares, in the centre the familiar flattened rose of the Tudors, and across it a curving narrow ribbon with her own name in minute letters on it. She saw that the design of the sketch was being patiently tooled into the leather with his makeshift instruments.

"For me!" she gasped. "The cover of a book—with my own device upon it—oh, Fernando, it's beautiful—" She turned back to him, suddenly gone dumb again, flushed with pleasure, her hands caught together.

"The book is yet to come," he confessed. "Unless you have something already—not too large—and needing a new cover—"

"For me," she repeated. "You've been working on this up here for me—and I never knew—you've been thinking of me, all that time—hours and hours of work—for me—"

"Why, sweetheart," he objected gently, "did you think I forgot you while my back was turned?"

She who from babyhood had laboured lovingly at her own careful gifts for Edward and for Mary and for Catherine was heartbreakingly grateful. Her life was pitifully bare of the devotion she lavished on others. Mary was not demonstrative, and she had no health, and her eyesight was bad; she bought the easiest thing and gave it when she must. Edward was not encouraged to waste his time. But now—to possess a gift made for her by Fernando. . . . She was both humbled and proud.

"I didn't know," she said again helplessly. "I didn't know."

"No one knew," he smiled. "I kept it hidden, till that day—that day in the courtyard. You summoned me before I was ready—I thought to be away only a few minutes—Griffin had leave and was gone for the day—so I didn't hide it. And now they all know, I suppose."

"They've been much too busy to notice anything. You were so ill—and anyway, Catherine would never tell and Jock is too little." She turned the board upon its face, the parchment under it, and came to kneel beside him again, sliding her hand jealously into his when he did not instantly reach for it. Hold me, she seemed to say—take me and hold me fast, it is my right.

"Shall you ever come here again?" he whispered. "Is it safe?"

"No—'tis not at all safe." Reminded of the waiting Jock, she sent a nervous glance toward the door which stood ajar. "I don't know—I shall try—but I suppose I dare not stop longer now. I shall be missed."

"We are always on the wing," he sighed. "You must go—or I must go—or someone is coming—or someone will hear or see—shall we ever have peace, I wonder—no."

"Wait," she said. "Things will not always be like this, I promise you. When I have my own house—as I shall have when I am older—" Again her troubled gaze explored his quarters. "Then you shall have a big room—all to yourself—more than one room—with a carved oak mantelpiece and a warm carpet on the floor—and a wardrobe, too, and a canopy to your bed, and—and a view out the windows——"

She broke off in surprise. Fernando was laughing. Flat on his back, white and drawn, his dark curls matted on the pillow, his lips cracked with fever—Fernando laughed and laughed. Her fine gold brows drew down.

"When I am grown," she told him severely, "I shall have the power to give you all these things—and anything else I please. I shall not always be a helpless girl with not enough money——"

Instantly he was grave.

"Sweetheart," he said. "Child, you're never angry with me——?"

"N-no, but——"

"I laughed but to think you thought such things could matter to me—so long as I can see you, serve you, every day! What are mantelpieces, or fires, for that matter—while you warm my heart? What do I care what I see from my window—when I have looked not long since into your eyes? Tell me what colour they are before I go mad with wondering. Let me see them—look at me——"

"Catherine says they are cat's eyes—yellow in the sun and black at night. But if I wear blue," she confided, "they turn blue, too—almost."

"Child," he said dreamily, gazing up into her face.

"But you would *like* a big room, Fernando," she reverted earnestly. "With a red Turkey carpet and a—a window-seat with cushions, and a casement that opens out——"

"Yes, of course—I should like all that—" he acquiesced, dreaming up at her. "—That would cause talk, I'm thinking!"

"Let them talk!" she sniffed. "Some day I shall be strong enough not to mind what anyone may say! My father never minded! Some day I shall be like him—and then let them take care!"

"Yes," he murmured, watching her. "Some day you will be great and powerful—greater than he was, perhaps——"

"*Fernando!*" She rebuked him in a shocked whisper. He spoke of her father, the dead King. It bordered on heresy.

But his eyes were eery, looking up at her.

"You will be the greatest Tudor of them all," he said slowly as though he read it for the first time on her brow and eyes and lips. "And then God pity *me*!"

"But I shall want you—need you—always!" she cried. "You must get well—quickly—and help me always!"

"And if—when you are Queen?" he queried, greatly moved.

She spread her hands to him with a piteous, unyouthful smile, somehow foreshadowing her long loneliness to come.

" Still just a wench," she whispered shamelessly. " Still loving you, like any other."

" Princesses are not wenches," he corrected, shocked in his turn, but pleased.

" *He* called me that," she defended. " My father—he said he wanted sons like me, but all he got was wenches—and poor Edward. I've never forgotten that—"

" He feared your marriage, I suppose—in case your brother——"

" But *you* need not fear it," she interrupted, and flushed magnificently while he stared, and hid her face beside his in the pillow.

" Ay, but you will marry some day," he remonstrated.

" Never," came her muffled protest.

" Would you leave England without an heir when you go ? "

She raised her head at that, and sat back on her heels beside the bed, thinking hard. At last her eyes found his, doubtful and distressed.

" No," he said gently, reading her in his uncanny way. " Mine would not do."

She knew that he was right, and a long sigh came from her heart.

" When I am Queen," she said slowly, " I shall rule alone. I want no Emperor Charles nor any meddling churchman to tell me what I must do in mine own land ! As for heirs—that can wait. I shall set no foreigner, nor the child of any foreigner, to govern England." She sat a moment, sibylline and mysterious, looking into the future. Then she straightened, and a hand went to her cap and hair. " And you—faith, you say these things, I think, only to make me say again that I love you ! I must go."

" Kiss me," he whispered, and as she hesitated his gaze grew humorous and imperative. " Kiss me—Elizabeth."

She bent to him swiftly, and then made for the door. There she paused.

" And I am *not* a child," she said, and left him.

When the latch had clicked behind her he lay and marvelled weakly at his own audacity and at the直ness of her aim. And then, having overtaxed his strength, he slept again, smiling, and was on the mend.

Not a child, she said ; and the boast was truer than either of them knew. At fourteen, shadowed by vague, impending storms, her sky already overcast by the still dim disasters of her royal future, her early-blooming Tudor passion stirred by the knowing Latin in him—Elizabeth was in love.

Forever honest with herself and her God, she returned to her chamber and surrendered to a very tumult of thankful prayer, pelting the Almighty with her incoherent praises ; indulged then in a brief shower of happy tears, and rose from her knees quite calm, quite composed, but tingling to her finger-tips with sheer love of life—caressing, with every breath she drew, the mere fact of her existence in a bright, exciting, perilous world which held such treasures as Fernando and the throne of England.

But no mere maiden faintness at first sight of blood accounted for

Elizabeth's white face when Harington delivered her to her governess after the duel. Mrs. Ashley's sharp eyes had noted some time ago a change in Elizabeth ; a softening and a brightening. At first she laid it uneasily to Seymour's reckless gallantries. Then she observed that Elizabeth remained aglow even during his absences at Court, and she did not overlook those brief mysterious vanishings which occurred without reference to the Admiral's whereabouts. The day that Fernando was wounded Mrs. Ashley made sure with a growing dismay that it was not the Lord Admiral but a page boy for whom Elizabeth was growing up.

Taking it all in all, she could hardly have said which was worse ; though she decided in the end that a page boy might be more easily dealt with than Thomas Seymour. She said nothing to Elizabeth that day ; but she became more and more observant as Fernando's convalescence went on, and so to her Elizabeth became henceforth as transparent as glass.

She was not a wise woman, nor a clever one—but she was human and fond, and she allowed herself to be ruled blindly by the alternate imperiousness and cajolery of Elizabeth's complex, unfolding nature. She enjoyed being bullied and made up to. She admired all that Elizabeth did and was. It was the Tudor family misfortune that almost nobody had the courage, or the wit, or the common strength of mind to enforce their own opinions against the family charm. There was Owen, and his headlong French widow ; there was Edmund, marrying a Beaufort ; Henry VII always got his way by hook or crook ; nobody ever crossed Henry VIII in his golden youth when he was universally adored. So with his daughter Elizabeth now in her lesser circumstance. Not so, alas, with Edward, who had somehow failed to inherit charm. Nobody disliked Edward ; but nobody spoilt and indulged him either.

Mrs. Ashley's easy, sentimental nature was totally inadequate to the task of curbing the flame-tipped creature in her charge. She let things slide, and hoped for the best. Decisive action or diplomatic caution were too much to expect of her. She knew just enough not to bear tales to Court, and that was all ; though she did whisper a few vague apprehensions to Parry, the household cofferer, and he, already dazzled by the Lord Admiral, pooh-poohed a mere page. After that she kept her own council.

Elizabeth went to Fernando's room only once more, and then only for a few moments, with Jock again on guard outside. This time she slipped a silk purse into the hand which lay on the coverlet.

"Promise me," she said quietly, "that when you are well enough to ride to London you will buy a leathern jacket to wear under your doublet. 'Tis not enough here for a shirt of mail, but I dare not wait till I can get more. You understand—a jacket made to turn a blade ! "

"But, sweetheart—" His fingers refused the purse. "You meant it for a new gown—"

"Oh, what are gowns to me !" she cried with a vehemence

which silenced him. "What are gowns, or anything else, to me—without you!"

"Has something happened, then—something new—to disturb you?"

"No—oh, no, nothing new—but he watches me, I think, and last night he inquired about my 'champion'—meaning you—and laughed. You will take care, Fernando—you must take care!"

"Why, child, who would think me worth a dagger in the ribs?" His eyes were grave as he asked it, wondering how much she guessed of all that.

"I don't know—I—" She gave it up, with a hand drawn fretfully across her brow as though to brush away a nagging pain.

He sighed.

"I have thought thoughts, lying here, my lady—and sometimes I am sorry to think you will be Queen. Is that a heresy?"

"But, Fernando, I have told you how—told you—"

"I know. I shall be the favourite." The word was bitter on his tongue.

"But—" She was watching him unhappily.

"This precious secrecy of ours will go—queens cannot have secrets—the ambassadors know everything!"

"And would you have me a milkmaid, then?" It was plain the idea arrested her.

"I would have us country folk in a modest manor, I think—moated and obscure and far from Court—"

For a moment they drifted, hand in hand. Then her back straightened resolutely.

"But I am the daughter of the King," she said, and looked at him levelly, her head held high against her own uncertainty. "England is mine—will be mine—and I must rule it."

"Ay," he said, wise beyond his years. "You will rule it."

"And I dare not stop here longer now, I—I'm afraid Mrs. Ashley knows." Her hauteur collapsed with the admission, but he had not heard.

"There is something I must say." His fingers closed firmly on her wrist, holding her there on her knees beside him. "I have had time to think, lying here—time to think—of everything. Sweetheart—if aught should happen to me—sometime—"

"No, no, no, it shall not! I shall keep you safe—"

"Wait," he said, so quietly that she obeyed, her eyes wide and watching. "One is but mortal—in any case—and if I should die first—soon or late—while you still need me—while you still love me, do you hear?—you are not to grieve. My life is naught—nay, sweetheart, hear me quickly and then go—my life is naught, I say, so soon as it parts from yours. I pray God I may live at least as long as you love me. But let us face things now together, as I have faced them these days and nights alone. And so—I would not have you grieve if I should die—Elizabeth."

Tears were running down her cheeks, and she did not know, or wipe them away. Her hand was passive in his grasp, her shoulders

drooped—and her widened eyes never left his. She knelt as if stricken, the breathing statue of a girl who cried.

"But I think I should never laugh again," she said simply.

"And would that make me rest the better in my grave?" he queried sadly. "Listen, my heart—no life like mine can dim a destiny like yours. You will be brave—you will be great—you will be Queen—whatever comes to me. But promise me—you will be a little happy, too."

"I cannot."

"Promise me—to try."

"Fernando—if you had died that morning on his sword—no one had ever known my love was dead. If ever I must face such a time again, I shall know how to behave. For each day now—each day of ours together now adds to my hoard of happiness against bad days to come. Ay, you can die sometime, being mortal—and there will be no more days for me like these if I am left behind—but I can be brave, I think, because nothing can rob me, ever, of these days I have had—with you."

Fernando was staring at her between awe and incredulity. Elizabeth the inarticulate, the shy, the hidden, and the secret, had found her tongue. And even while he stared, the strange illumination flickered out of her like the snuffing of a candle and she was herself again, glancing at him sidewise with the old half-awkward wistfulness; that look which was a kind of stammer in itself, so pregnant was it with the things which could not come beyond her eyes.

"But you—you *will* buy the jacket?" she added lamely.

A moment later he was contemplating the door which had clicked behind her, the silk purse in his hand. For her sake he must use the money as she bade him. He could not afford to be killed.

V

A few days more and Fernando was on his feet again, enraged and incredulous at the faintness which overtook him with his efforts at exercise.

Greatly privileged, for he still slept ill at times, he was allowed to keep the tiny room to himself. And he fell into a habit on wakeful nights of walking in the garden till his very weariness brought oblivion when at last he went to bed. He would watch from a certain spot on the river-bank until Elizabeth's light went out—and then return past the landing-stairs by a circuitous route to a side door which led to his own part of the house.

"I saw someone moving on the lawn last night," she said one afternoon when they met briefly on the main staircase in the hall, she going down and he coming up, so that she stood above him. "I made sure it was you, and almost came down. Was it you?"

"And whose business is it?" he inquired with a long, slanting

look, "if I choose to take a solitary stroll beneath your windows till the light goes out?"

"The night air can't be good for you," she worried.

"I must get on my legs again, and a walk at bedtime makes me sleep. Last night was mild, and the tide was right, and I took the skiff out into the moon-path on the river and thought about you."

"The skiff? But Fernando, your wound—"

"Is quite well enough for a bit of sculling to take the stiffness out of it!"

"Well—I don't like it." She passed him, and their fingers brushed in secret as she went. "Mind the landing-stairs at low tide," she added over her shoulder as she moved slowly downward, step by step, looking back to where he hung above the banister. "Kate slipped in the slime on the bottom step one day and turned her ankle very badly."

Round the turn of the stair she met Thomas Seymour starting up, and wondered quickly what he had heard—a few careless words to a lad who had been ill, she reassured herself; that was all.

Thomas, ascending two at a time in long, muscular leaps, overtook the dawdling page at the top and cuffed him playfully on the ear with an air of waggish sympathy.

"Once be ill," he philosophized, "and let them get the upper hand, and they will keep you at their apron-strings until you die of it!"

And he passed on, whistling, in another direction from Fernando's.

There were few stolen interviews, for the boy was wise and she was cautious, and the night air was sharp now for her lingering. They understood each other too well to require the self-indulgence of love vows in corners. Later, when she was more secure, they would see more of each other. At present the mere business of daily life absorbed them and they accepted it with fortitude.

Elizabeth realized now that Mrs. Ashley was watching. She tried at first to brazen it out. Then she provoked the governess to speak her mind and flew into a temper; she could manage her own concerns, she said. And then, all at once, April that she was these days, she wept piteously, curled herself into Mrs. Ashley's always ready arms, and cajoled her into a conspiracy of silence; fastened greedily upon the first sign of relenting weakness, bound her by solemn oaths never to mention the matter of Fernando again all her life long, wept again, was generous with her rare caresses, and altogether enchanted the poor woman into tacitly sanctioning what she well knew to be a dangerous state of affairs.

Catherine was very kind to Fernando these days, and boasted prettily of her skill in nursing as demonstrated by his speedy recovery. Seymour's attitude toward him had changed with his convalescence. The Admiral became bluff and cordial, and made a show of admiration for Fernando's pluck, and once even laid a heavy arm around his neck and called him "lad" with an affection almost fraternal. He was all but saying in so many words that bygones should be bygones between them, and the implication

with regard to Elizabeth, if any, was that he could afford not to be jealous about what he was now convinced amounted to nothing.

Thus in the genial embrace of Seymour's good humour, they became all one merry family again. The air was somehow cleared. His moods were over, and he forgave everybody for them. The morning romps continued, with Catherine joining in, and Elizabeth in an almost hysterical reaction from tension accepted the invasions with good grace.

Meanwhile she was learning slowly, almost unwillingly, to dream. Cool-headed and studious by nature, she had lost small time so far in idle schoolgirl romancing. Love as she saw it among the maids and as it echoed to her from the Court, and more lately Seymour's version, had left her unenvious. And she had always known only too well that it did not flourish in the shadow of a throne. During her father's lifetime there had been horrid demonstrations of the peril a queen's love brought to him who won it. And now there was the Council, jealously watching her own every movement.

But how if there were no King and no Council? How if she ruled alone. . . .

Therein lay her long, dim dreams : herself on the throne, quite alone, Queen in her own right—and behind the throne Fernando, gentle and laughing and kind—she could never marry him, of course—she would never marry anyone—but some day she would be Queen and Fernando would be safe then, and hers, because in her would lie the power to protect him. . . .

Meanwhile there were snatched moments, heart to heart ; brief whisperings in his arms ; and a warm, pervasive glow of well-being throughout her days, lulling her natural caution and blunting her quick perception. It was a good world, and life was sweet. And as for Thomas—well, see, he meant no harm after all.

Fernando was weighed down by a problem in ethics. As his head cleared there remained no slightest doubt in it that Seymour had made a deliberate attempt to kill him. He felt that Elizabeth should be told that he was sure of this, as she had obviously not been in a position to judge for herself ; and yet he hated to mention it. By mutual consent, each out of a private chagrin, they avoided discussion of the duel. How could he suddenly say to her in their few precious moments together : "My wound was no accident." It was a terrible accusation to make now, in the face of Seymour's open friendliness. By anyone but Elizabeth it would be considered the basest kind of boorishness, and he was not sure that even she would give it full credence. Besides, my lord had lost his temper and was hardly responsible. It was plain that he deeply regretted. . . .

But against his own reasoning, Fernando was not happy about the Lord Admiral. He wanted to warn Elizabeth that things were not as charming and simple as they looked—but he could not bear to mar her breathing-spell of happy confidence in life. And it was only an instinct, a sort of second sight, on which he must look askance, that told him Seymour was playing some deep game.

So both of those two who might have cooked Seymour's goose

forever where Elizabeth was concerned held their foolish tongues—Harington returning to London with a conviction that he was cheaply out of a bad business, and Fernando merely biding his time at Chelsea. Fernando meant not to let her trust the Lord Admiral too far. But it had been horrible to see her frightened of the man when she must live under his roof. Let her be at peace for a time if she could. . . . His boy's judgment blundered and he delayed too long.

Before the same moon had waned, he stood again on the landing-stairs debating with a black cloud which drove up against the moon with a threat of snow. As its fringe touched the nimbus he decided that the night was much too cold for sculling, wakeful as he felt—and the tide was very low. Idly he turned away from the skiff, his green cape wrapped close against the rising wind, when something catapulted into him from the bank-side.

He staggered, recovered his balance with a stab of pain in his injured shoulder, and instantly received a powerful shove toward the water, and then another. The landing-stairs had no railing. He caught at space in blackness—and felt himself falling. . . .

VI

Next morning a rime of thin snow lay across the lawn, which was striped with white tree-shadows of unmelted frost in the bright sunshine. Elizabeth, waking unusually early, despised the rest of humanity for sluggards and skipped out before breakfast, making intricate tracks in the slippery whiteness at various angles from the house in the reckless hope that Fernando would see her and come out too.

She was muffled in the heavy black velvet cloak with the hood pulled close over her red hair. It fastened with a flat sewn rose of gold cloth either side, which held a gold cord to tie beneath her chin. Her pale cheeks grew pink in the cold.

With a vague, aching need of his company, she passed close to the old tree, saw its bench rimmed in white, and drifted on, lonely and thoughtful, scuffing at the ground. The sun was melting out her tracks, which led away from the house along the river-bank—by the time they wanted to find her she would be out of sight at the bottom of the garden, among the shrubbery. Let them hunt, then. Except for a growing hunger in the sharp air she was satisfied with her solitude.

The tide was on the ebb, exposing a few inches of muddy bank below the high-water-line on an easy slope from the lawn. She glanced about the chilly landscape, nursing a faint hope—sometimes she had come upon him in the early morning like this, out on a ramble of his own. In summer his hands would be full of flowers for her. . . . Something caught her eye at the edge of the water.

She looked again, distantly—a body?—she turned back toward the house with a swift sickness—drowned—they must come and

take it away at once—her eye retained an impression of colour in the dark mud—green, out of season—she hesitated—swung round—and began to run down the bank.

The River had been kind to him. A few minutes of struggle in the formless tangle of the eel grass on the bottom—a few hours quiet in its silken grasp—and then the rising tide had drawn him free and left him on the sloping bank at the very bottom of the garden. He lay waist-deep in water, the crumpled semi-circle of his green cape heavy with mud beneath him ; half on his side, face down, as though he slept, an arm bent behind his head, his curls washed back from a smudged cheek.

Elizabeth bit her knuckles and made no sound. For only a matter of seconds she stood there, staring down at him. It was her first sight of death, but she knew unreasoningly that it was too late now for anybody to do anything.

He was gone. All that young laughter, all that grave ardour, that warm, breathing column of young strength she had clung to—dead.

Numbly her mind began to work at once for his protection. Bushes screened him from the house, but anyone passing on the River to or from the village was sure to see—soon he would be found and taken up—carried away to be buried—first they would come to her and say that one of her pages—ask her what was to be done with him—she reeled in the sunlight. Soon she would have to face them—pretend it did not matter much—just the right shade of feeling and regret for a dead favourite—therefore she must not be found—like this.

She turned in panic, paused, and swayed back to bend above him—remembered in time to protect her dress from the mud—knew that she must leave something of hers with him to keep him company in the grave—there were no flowers now—it must be something of herself, that belonged to her—her rings were known and numbered—violently she tore off one of the flat gold roses from the fastening of her cloak. Gathering her skirts carefully about her, with a furtive glance up and down the empty River, she stooped, worked at the sodden buttonhole of his doublet, and pushed the rose inside against the icy silk of his white shirt. Her fingers winced away from his dreadful lack of warmth—teeth set on lower lip, she delayed to force the button home again, and straightened, staring at her wet, stiff, muddied fingers which had touched him. It was her first contact with death, and he had held her, she had kissed him. . . .

Dazed and sick and tearless, in a haze of hideous calm, she made her plodding way back toward the house, noticing gratefully that her tracks no longer showed on the wet turf. Under the tree the bench still held its rim of rime, shaded by the close bare branches from the sun. She shuddered as she passed it, gained the little side-door she had found so often in the dark, reached the stairs to her apartments, crept up them step by step, holding to the banister, shut her door on her always doubtful privacy, stood stonily in the middle of the room trying to plan.

She decided she had not been out at all, and huddled the cloak into its usual place at the foot of the bed, dragging the rumpled coverlet across it with an effect of carelessness. She poured out water from a ewer and washed and dried her cold fingers. She pulled down the heavy twist of her hair so that it fell every way as though she had just risen—undid the fastenings of her gown—pressed both hands against her throbbing temples—and then set up a peevish clamour for her women.

When they came, half-dressed and apologetic, she rated them for laziness, and complained that she had not slept, felt ill, had no one to help her rise, and was badly served and neglected as no princess of the blood had ever been before.

"There, there," said Mrs. Ashley, soothing royal tempers. "It was that Gascoigne wine you had last night. I warned my lord you could not stand up to it—but, of course, your Grace is ill!—does he think a maid has got his stomach for drink?" And so on.

Elizabeth, who had clean forgotten the wine and was not at all the worse for it, fastened upon it as the crowning grievance in Seymour's long list of misdemeanours, enlarged upon her bad night, grumblingly swallowed the dose Catherine prepared, and appeared downstairs at last, pale and languid and resentful, cold-shouldering his chaff about intemperance.

And now that there was time to think, one word had taken possession of her mind, and sat there breeding torment of its own : *How?* She had only just come to that, what with the numbness and the play-acting about the wine. But how had it happened? How had Fernando got into the River, fully clothed even to his cape? So far as she knew he bore no marks of violence—but she wished she had looked more closely. There was no blood—she was fairly sure of that. His face was not marred by a blow. Apparently he had not been disabled and then thrown in. He was a strong swimmer—but there was his wound—the grass?—the tide?—how and when had Fernando got into the River?

She flinched again and again from a recurrent suspicion which would have made life at Chelsea insupportable—reasoning that once indeed she might have wondered if Thomas could have set an assassin on him—but not now, she reiterated sickly, recoiling from the charge—that was all over—Thomas was friends again now—and anyway, Thomas would have—in the first place Thomas would never dare—*Who would think me worth a dagger in the ribs?*—not Thomas—no, no, it must have been sheer mischance—but how had Fernando died?

The hours dragged on.

She knew that for the best possible effect she ought to demand Fernando's presence and stage another tantrum when he could not be found—the last touch of verisimilitude to her pained surprise when they brought her the news of his death. But shrinking from his very name, she took refuge in being too ill to want to see anyone, and moped piteously in full view of Seymour, to make sure he did

not forget he was the cause of her indisposition, with his Gascoigne wine. Meanwhile he lounged on a settle near the fire, twanging a lute that was out of tune and nagging at Catherine, idle and quarrelsome and bored, as he was likely to be when away from the distractions of Court life.

At last a scared flunkey was at the door, requesting an audience with my Lady Elizabeth.

"I'll see him for you, Bess," said Catherine kindly, rising from her embroidery frame. "I'll find out what he wants, and tell him you're ill."

A minute later she was back, with frightened, compassionate eyes.

"I'm afraid it's bad news, Bess. One of your pages—has been drowned in the River."

Elizabeth turned to her a blank white face.

"Which page?"

"Fernando."

The room was very still. Seymour's fingers were at rest on his lute strings, and he watched her from under his brows. Catherine stood drooping against the door, stricken with her quick, whole-hearted sympathy. Elizabeth opened colourless lips on a sigh which seemed to acknowledge the last straw in a tiresome day.

"Lord God, what a pity!" she complained fretfully. "He was the best lad of all. How did it happen?"

She dared not look at Seymour as she asked that question, but all her nerves were tuned to him, and still she could detect nothing in his slouching grace on the settle by the fire. He had not betrayed the slightest satisfaction—nor had he rushed into surprise or sympathy. Of course, like herself, he had had time. . . .

"The skiff was untied last night by somebody." Catherine spoke softly, her hand on the door outside which the flunkey waited. "It has drifted into shore down by the village half a mile beyond the—the body."

The skiff—and the landing-stairs! Memory stabbed through her—that day on the staircase—her own prophetic words—while his hand sought hers as they passed.

"I warned him of those stairs at low tide!" It was wrung from her in place of a cry of pain.

"Yes, and the tide was low last night," said Catherine. "They think he must have missed his footing as he stepped in or out of the skiff—you remember how I hurt myself last summer and Thomas said a railing——"

"Yes, yes, I remember! In God's name why did you not have a railing, then!"

"We thought that with winter coming on, the stairs would not be so much in use and——"

"Off on some night jaunt of his own, eh!" said Seymour, with a vile chord. "Some jill in the village, I'll wager——"

"He was not seen in the village last night, they say," Catherine rebuked him with gentle dignity.

" Well, then, she waited all night for him, poor lass ! There's tragedy for you—!" And he began a sentimental ditty, out of tune.

" Be quiet, Thomas !" said Catherine sharply. " Do you want to see the man who found the body, Bess—or shall I send him away ? "

" Send him away, if you love me !" sighed Elizabeth, and rested her head on a shielding hand. " Say I'm sorry—say I'm ill—say they are not to trouble me about it—" And as Catherine turned to go—" And mind, Kate, I'll have no fuss about the funeral ! Tell them to put him away quickly ! "

Catherine closed the door behind her with a puzzled backward glance in which disapproval mingled with pity.

" You *are* a cold one, Bess !" said Seymour in the silence, picking at his discordant lute strings. " I thought you were fond of the boy. But—' Put him away quickly ! ' says her Grace ! You're your father's daughter, no mistake ! He never could abide the idea of a corpse ! "

" In pity's name, Thomas, either tune the thing or let it be !" she cried. " Here, give it me—!" She snatched the lute out of his hands and set to work on the pegs. " I said he was the best lad, didn't I ? What more can I say ? I shall not have his like again, for honesty and sense." She struck mad chords loudly, and then thrust the lute at him again. " It wants a new G string. Dear God, how my head does ache ! It must be the fire, I think—" She went to stand at the window, drumming on the pane, staring out at the fading winter day.

Somewhere in the desolation which engulfed her she recognized a ray of relief. Fernando had slipped—he must have slipped—his cape had hampered him—his shoulder was still stiff—but Thomas could have had nothing to do with it. It was truly a mischance, somehow forecast in her own prophetic soul. She had had, in her love, a glimmering of second sight, perhaps—no doubt such things happened—out of her great love for him she had been permitted to warn him of his own destiny—and he had not heeded—he could not know—she herself did not know the solemnity of the words as she spoke them—but Thomas was not to blame, which alone made life just barely tolerable.

Seymour at his idle strumming watched her moodily. Strange pale creature that she was ! Kate had been pat enough with that theory of the unmoored skiff, bless her innocent heart. It was always easy enough to introduce an idea into Kate's unsuspecting head, and the story came even better than he had hoped, from such credulous lips. Obviously there was no question in anybody's mind as to how the boy had contrived to drown himself. There was no need even for the suggestion of suicide for hopeless love, with which he was prepared. There was no danger—no danger at all. Fernando knew what had happened, but he was dead. A ruffian named Hutchins knew, but he was paid and could soon be conveniently expelled from the neighbourhood. And Seymour

knew, but he had been in the house coaxing Elizabeth to drink wine at the very moment when that dark cloud drove up against the moon.

And now, watching her erect and self-possessed back as she stood drumming on the window-pane, Seymour entertained a passing doubt—had he gone to all that trouble and expense for nothing? Nevertheless, it was a noble scheme, based so cleverly on Fernando's known habits and that scrap of overheard conversation on the staircase. She herself had warned him of low tide. Beyond a doubt the Lord Admiral had been clever this time, even to the instructions about unmooring the tell-tale skiff and setting it adrift, when the rest had been accomplished.

Seymour tasted the satisfaction of a blunder well retrieved.

VII

The body of Fernando the page lay all that day and night awaiting directions for its disposal, but no orders came from his mistress as to interment or ceremonys. He had no family to claim him. Mrs. Ashley's shocked remonstrance died in its opening sentence, cut off by three cold words requesting silence. Catherine's business-like arrangements were sharply countermanded. They were to bury him as he was, privately, that night. Seymour raised quizzical eyebrows at his wife. A quarrel? A childish vindictiveness for disobedience to some expressed wish of hers, pursuing the culprit beyond the grave? Or just the Tudor aversion to a funeral? Seymour was now more than half-convinced that he had guessed altogether wrong. Even to his unreverent heart, it was inconceivable that any beloved body could be thus callously committed to the burial of a stray dog. All that trouble, all those gold sovereigns, wasted. The boy meant nothing to her, after all.

Elizabeth, pacing the floor of her chamber in the cold dark, tearless, knew what she was doing. Years later, an ageing, lonely woman, she was to weep aloud for the boy Fernando, when nobody else could remember him. To-night she did not cry. But she must allow him to go neglected to a shallow, ill-marked grave, wearing his soaked suit of Tudor green, in order that the gold rose inside his doublet might not be discovered, wondered at, recognized, or taken from him. To him it would be a better passport to paradise than the prayers of all the priests in England. She tried to say those prayers herself, alone on her knees behind the bolted door of her bedroom—but it only made her cry, when all her life depended on not having red eyes from any secret weeping, so she gave it up and prayed for strength instead. He would understand—he would want her not to cry—he would see that all she had left was their inviolate secret—he would not mind, surely he would understand, wherever he was, why there could be no prayers. . . .

Next day she was calm (and Catherine thought her heartlessly cheerful) absorbing herself quietly in books and needlework.

But into her eyes had come a watchful look which never left them after. What next, they seemed to say. This thing has happened to me—this inconceivable thing—this robbery and plundering. Well, what next?

Life had drawn first blood. She faced up to it royally, quivering but dry-eyed, guarding her feelings as queens must do. She stood alone now in the shadow of the throne. When her time came to rule she must rule alone, undefended and uncomforted by his loyalty and love. All that she did she must do by herself, for herself. *The greatest Tudor of them all*—he had thought that of her. And now she must go on without him and be it. Greater than her father, even? Well, at least there would be less marrying. . . .

She passed the winter somehow, self-possessed, elusive, whetting her tongue good-naturedly on Seymour's rough wit. He could not make her out, he never could quite make up his mind whether or not he had acted hastily with regard to the page boy. He wasted no time in regrets, even supposing he had overreached himself, but he was forced to admire a capacity for duplicity which rivalled his own. She baffled him. He must needs adore her for it.

Unconsciously he adjusted himself to her new dignity and reserve. His wooing became more subtle, with a mocking tenderness which found her half-grateful, half-repelled. She was unutterably lonely, and she had been made aware of love. Seymour's ardent lingering gaze and persistent gallantries left her sighing, moved, and empty. Besides, she was tasting her woman's power. It appeared that Thomas could be tamed.

Mrs. Ashley looked on bewildered. Elizabeth had sturdily shunned sympathy in the first shock of Fernando's loss, and since then with angry tears and flaring tempers repeatedly forbade the mere mention of his name. And now, so soon, so heartlessly, she was leading the Lord Admiral on. Mrs. Ashley pursed knowing lips. King Henry's daughter!

Since Fernando was now safely dead, Mrs. Ashley would have been willing to indulge a sentimental sadness. But this unheard-of resiliency, this lack of suitable response to her tactful commiseration, scandalized her. Her nature was never one to comprehend a sorrow too precious to mourn. She began to regard the Seymour affair with a speculative eye. My lady consoled herself, and promptly too.

Except for the Scottish wars, which seemed to go on forever, it was a quiet winter in England. Little Mary Stuart was to go to France to marry the Dauphin instead of becoming the bride of her cousin Edward VI, as the dead King had hoped. Somerset had contrived to bungle the Scottish matter rather badly.

The busiest man in the kingdom was Seymour, in a quiet way; and Edward, too closely kept by the Council, began to look to his dashing uncle Thomas for relief from the tedium of his studious existence. From Seymour he learned to gamble and to borrow money, and to consider himself a devil of a fellow if he had but the chance to branch out a bit. The somewhat tentative swagger

resulting from Seymour's subtle flattery sat oddly on the boy's natural priggishness. He admired his uncle Thomas for a fine figure of a man—and by him was made to feel somehow ashamed of most of the things he had hitherto believed and accepted as inevitable.

It was all very disturbing for Edward. His uncle Thomas would slap him on the back so that he staggered, and bid him assert himself and be a man. And casting a near-sighted gaze round his limited landscape for opportunities of manliness, Edward saw only card-games, which he secretly considered dull; and the endless negotiations for his marriage, in which he was not much interested, especially as none of them ever came to anything anyway. Then he would find himself in debt, or he would simply become obtuse about everything, and the harassed Council would wag its beards, and his whipping-boy would suffer.

And yet, for all that it cost him so much trouble and uneasiness, Edward earnestly desired that his brilliant uncle Thomas should think well of him, and approve his doings. He deplored the frequent quarrels which flared up between Thomas and his other uncle, the Protector. Those two could not get along.

Spring came and passed uneventfully at Chelsea, except that Catherine would have a child at last, in the early autumn. Elizabeth, remembering Edward's warm, soft babyhood, was delighted, and she and Catherine drew still closer together, as women will, over the needlework. She was glad of anything more to do, anything new to think about, which helped her to screen from herself the desolation which lay in wait for unwary thoughts that looked backward.

One occupied oneself. And in this Seymour had his share. Young and wretched and restless, a little vain and very complicated she was this spring of 1548. She found it amusing, a distraction, to play with fire in the shape of Seymour's growing infatuation. She recognized that it threatened to become more than an idle flirtation on his side. Seymour meant to have her, no mistake. She began perversely to enjoy the chase, which held an acknowledged fascination. She meant to pull him up before it went too far, of course; was confident of her ability to check him at her own will. She who had learned love from a worshipping boy was still innocent enough to think she could deal with the most experienced gallant in England.

On a mild evening in May, Seymour returned unannounced from St. James's, where the Court was. Elizabeth at an open casement saw him ride into the courtyard, and flinched from the memory of a day almost a year ago when he had ridden in as unexpectedly. . . . She left the window and wandered to another, which gave on the garden and the river-bank—where once she had seen Fernando stretched asleep. . . . The damp, sweet evening was haunted.

With an impatient breath, half sob, half sigh, she called for candles and took refuge at her writing-desk. She was already forming a habit which lasted all her life: when things would not

bear thinking of, when one's brain must be kept out of mischief—make a translation.

She was putting an Italian sermon into Latin now, with elaborate initials done in red ink and scrolls. When it was finished, with a needlework cover of her own stitching, it would go to Edward as a gift. She opened the book and took up her pen.

“—omnes in quieta possessione—regni sui collocauerit, illos patri suo offeret felicissimos et triumphantes.”

Thomas would go first to Catherine, of course ; she was not well ; and food would doubtless be served to him in her rooms. He would be tired and go to bed at once, perhaps. One would surely not have to see him until morning, it was all of eight o'clock now—the sunset chill had come already. She rose and went to close the casement above the garden—her hands were cold and moist. Strange, that he had sent no message ahead. . . .

The red ink, now, for the first word in a new paragraph—she settled herself again at the table.

“ RARI sunt igitur qui vere cognoscunt, verum si illum cognoscere——”

Perhaps he had wanted to surprise Catherine with his early return. She drooped and grew listless these days without him. It was a long and weary business, this bearing of children, and Catherine was no longer young—of course, out of kindness he would stay with Catherine this first evening at home. . . .

“—velis, necesse est ut scias, Christum——”

Without doubt, he had hurried home to see how Catherine did, and he would sup and sit with her to-night, though illness made him irritable, as was the way with men—they could not understand—one hoped he would be very kind this time—he was not always kind—it would not do to love Thomas, to put one's whole defenceless heart into his hands as Catherine had done—for all the gentleness and loving laughter in the world were dead now—dead. . . . Why didn't Thomas come !

“—Christum illum esse, per quem Deus ab initio propo——”

The door flew wide without a knock.

“ Ho, Bess—so here you are at last ! They tried to tell me you had gone to bed ! And I answered them it mattered not for that, I was minded to kiss you good night instead of good morning, bed or no bed—faith, I half hoped they might be right !—but this will do, eh ? ” His warm mouth sought hers, missed by the slight turn of her head, and smacked heartily on her cheek. As he straightened, his eye was caught by the paper before her. “ And what's all this—a love letter ? ”

He screwed the page about to read—his finger left a smudge—the whole thing would have to be copied to-morrow—his other arm lay heavily across her shoulders. She dropped the pen and pressed her cold, damp palms together.

“ ‘Tis only a sermon—for Edward.”

“ Body of God, let the boy outgrow his sermons an' he will ! What good my trying to make a man of him, and a king, if you and Cheke and Mary and the rest keep pouring all this pap into him !

Nay, Bess, no quarrel to-night ! Look pleased to see your Thomas home again, in pity's name ! ” He pulled her to her feet. “ Stand up, then, and let's look at you ! Now, now—come out from behind the chair—”

His arm around her waist, they paced to the window-seat and he sat close against her, the pressure of his knee on hers dragging at her skirt, she staring out at the last green glow of the spring sky while he talked ; he brought all the latest Court tales of faithlessness and discord and intrigue ; his laughter was hearty and unfeigned ; and his sly, knowing eyes never left her face.

He saw that she resisted him with all her mind, while her hands lay passive in his. He had learned a certain caution in approaching her—which was indeed something new for him. He had learned a cat-like patience. He found the game a long one, but to-night as he watched her in the eery glow from the green horizon it seemed to him that in her heavy eyes, her pallor, the droop of her lovely lips, he foresaw the end of it at last.

He shifted to place an arm behind her so that she leaned against him, her shoulder on his breast, his lips close to her ear. His voice dropped. He began to whisper the things he knew how to say.

She lay back quietly against him while the echo of an old sweet thrill ran through her, and her young wisdom went down before it—it, and her strong inherited hunger to be loved—until at last she turned in his embrace and drew a sigh, and her arms crept slowly round his neck. . . .

“ You did not say if you wanted supper, Thomas.” Catherine stood at the half-open door, her hand upon the latch.

Elizabeth jerked to her feet, scarlet and ashamed. Catherine had come upon them together before, but this was different—and this time Catherine minded. For she stood leaning heavily on the door, her neat little body already clumsy with the child she carried, and her eyes were wild and dark and full of agony.

“ Yes, Kate—supper by all means—a cold joint and a loaf will do—and the best ale in the house, mind you—” Seymour rose also, with a broad blandness slightly overdone.

But Catherine stood still, looking at them, as though having said what she had come to say she had somehow run down and could do no more.

“ Kate—” Elizabeth could not endure the silence. “ Kate, you must not think—but I never meant to wrong you, Kate ! ”

“ You will leave my house to-morrow,” said Catherine, without any emotion. “ Ay, it is still *my* house—and I have the right to say who shall live in it. To-morrow you will go, do you hear—you are old enough to look to yourself now, it seems.” And then, in a cry of pain—“ Merciful God, *you* ! And I trusted you ! ”

“ Kate, you are making mountains.” Seymour went towards her with an anxious face. “ You are not well, sweetheart—you exaggerate—”

She stepped back away from him, both hands palm out before her, warning him off.

"They are setting out something in my parlour for you to eat. I beg you will not try to see me again to-night." She left them.

"God's wounds!" said Seymour ruefully. "Here's a pretty mess! She'll harm herself—she'll harm the child—" He started for the door.

"Let her be, Thomas." Elizabeth stood with her back to him, staring at the window which was just a dark glass now. "Let her be. You will only set her crying. Go now—but let her be."

"Ah, but Bess, you are not angry—" He swung back to her, a hand outstretched.

"Good night, Thomas."

"And as for this silly talk about your leaving the house to-morrow—"

"I shall go."

He declared with oaths that she should not—he tramped about the room working up a fury—he swore more oaths as to his own righteousness—and as soon as he had begun to ease off a bit—

"I shall go to-morrow. Good night, Thomas."

Without turning, she heard the door bang behind him, and fell then into a wild passion of weeping, flung on her knees beside the window-seat.

Mrs. Ashley found her there, and gathered her into sympathetic arms, and got her to bed and heard with dismay the sobbing, broken fragments of the disaster. And what she was not told she guessed, and that for the most part wrongly.

VIII

Catherine died at Sudeley in September, when her child was born. It was a girl, so Seymour had no use for it, and it was to have a short unhappy destiny of its own. To make Catherine's humiliation complete, Somerset's lady had just borne a healthy boy; and though Thomas wrote lyrically to his brother of the beauty of his girl babe, his unreasonable jealousy was flicked in the raw again.

He had very little use for Catherine either, any more; and she, her brief happiness over, had delusions that made him seem even less kind than he was; and he was not a man to be at his best in a sickroom. So Catherine died, with tears on her cheeks, believing in her delirium that while he held her hand and tried unluckily to comfort her he was laughing at her grief.

Elizabeth had the sense to know that in Catherine she had lost her best friend in all the world, though she found some consolation in the fact that Catherine had forgiven her for her part in the scene at Chelsea, so that she cherished the memory of an affectionate farewell. For it was Elizabeth herself who insisted that her days in Catherine's household were over, and held obstinately to her banishment. As soon as Catherine had had time to think, her bitter knowledge of her husband exonerated Elizabeth. And Elizabeth, wiping away the Queen's weak tears which would not cease to flow

as the time for parting drew near, swore again and again that she was not hurt nor angry—indeed no, they were friends—would always be the warmest of friends—but she would not, could not stay in that house any longer ; she would go to Hatfield for the summer. It was always her favourite residence, she explained, the cradle of her babyhood. Catherine let her go with repeated injunctions as to her future discretion and industry—“ For I believe,” said Catherine earnestly, clinging to her, “ that you are destined to be Queen of England.”

You will be brave, you will be great, you will be Queen, whatever comes to me. She could not afford to sit down among the echoes and weep. Life swept her on, and Fernando was no longer life. She must learn to do without him. Better to leave him there beside the River, with the last of her childhood. So she departed from Chelsea at Whitsuntide, with a last long look at the garden in the sun—and knew that she turned a finished page.

Affectionate letters passed between Catherine and Elizabeth, that last summer of Catherine’s life, and if she had lived the old love would have knit them always. No estrangement could exist between Elizabeth and the unborn child in which she felt an almost proprietary interest, and even Seymour joined in keeping her informed of its progress. Elizabeth was homesick, and Catherine was lonely and ill.

July 31.

Although your Highness’ letters be most joyful to me in absence, yet, considering what pain it is to you to write, your Grace being so great with child, and so sickly, your commendation were enough in my lord’s letter. I much rejoice at your health, with the well-liking of the country, with my humble thanks that your Grace wished me with you till I were weary of that country. Your Highness were like to be cumbered, if I should not depart till I were weary being with you ; although it were in the worst soil in the world, your presence would make it pleasant. I cannot reprove my lord for not doing your commendation in his letter, for he did it ; and although he had not, yet I will not complain on him, for that he shall be diligent to give me knowledge from time to time how his busy child doth ; and if I were at his birth, no doubt I would see him beaten, for the trouble he hath put you to. Master Denny and my lady, with humble thanks, prayeth most entirely for your Grace, praying the Almighty God to send you a most lucky deliverance ; and my mistress wisheth no less, giving your Highness most humble thanks for her commendations. Written with little leisure, this last day of July. Your humble daughter,

ELIZABETH.

This letter followed Catherine to Sudeley in Gloucestershire, where she had gone in June to arrange the princely apartments designed for the nurseries of her child, which everyone conspired to

assure her would be a boy. Seymour, somewhat sobered, and anxious about his wife's health, sent her letters from Court in the old playful tone of the days before their marriage, making gay reference to the "little knave" who was to be their son. He returned to Sudeley in time for the birth ; in time to let Catherine see his disappointment that it was only a girl ; and doubtless to repent however briefly of many things, at her deathbed.

He found himself a free man, then, in September ; so opportunely that a question was whispered in some quarters as to whether Catherine's death was an altogether natural one. It was maliciously commented upon that he did not disperse Catherine's waiting-women and maids-of-honour. A vicious rumour ran that he kept up the magnificence of his almost royal household in London for the reception of a new wife very soon. And knowing heads were nodded when he went to visit Elizabeth within the month—she was at Ashridge in October—looking handsome and melancholy in his splendid new mourning.

He was certainly above himself these days, exaggerating his wealth and position and quarrelling arrogantly with his neighbours and tenants in local matters till complaints reached the Duke of Somerset, who was moved to send Thomas a letter of fraternal reproof out of the "hard affection" he claimed to bear him. It was a semi-official admonition only ; Somerset was not a hasty man. "*We would wish rather to hear that all the King's subjects were of you gently and liberally treated with honour than that any one should be said to be of you either injured or extremely handled,*" he wrote sonorously, and signed himself "*your loving brother.*"

It did not sit well with Thomas. Nor did other rebukes, less forbearing, during the unseemly wrangle over the dead Queen's property, which Seymour demanded as his right, and which the Government claimed and held in defiance of her will, although that had left him all she possessed and expressed the piteous wish that it was more.

Checked by his brother at every turn, Thomas began to burrow underground. He succeeded in working Edward up to a state of more or less futile indignation against alleged restrictions of his kingly power and curtailments of his personal liberty—and indeed the boy was not left to himself for a quarter of an hour, his correspondence was closely scrutinized, and the companionship of his sisters was forbidden on the grounds that it depressed him. Seymour told him he must be a man now. Edward had heard that somewhere before. So he was persuaded to undertake to lodge a complaint before Parliament requesting the removal of the Lord Protector from power. His uncle Thomas helpfully drafted the letter for him, and Edward agreed to copy it out and sign it. Someone betrayed the scheme to Somerset, and Seymour was summoned before the Council for a public reprimand this time.

He was haughty enough at first, but something less than an actual threat of the Tower changed his tone. It was pointed out to him that he conspired against the existing government, which was

treason. He climbed down hastily. There was a family reconciliation scene. And Somerset either out of brotherly love or excessive relief added eight hundred pounds a year to Thomas's income ; an anti-climax to well-merited discipline.

Seymour's projects had become many and large. He was minting money of his own at Bristol, and secretly amassing followers among the discontented faction which always existed at Court. He had secured the guardianship of Lady Jane Grey, a child of eleven who came next in the succession after Elizabeth, as the granddaughter of Henry's sister Mary and her second husband, Charles Brandon. The transaction, which Seymour called a loan, amounted to purchase.

Jane had been at Sudeley among Catherine's women when the Queen died, and her parents suggested that she return at once to their house in Leicestershire. But it did not suit Seymour's plans to let her out of his keeping just then. She was one of his assets. Jane herself did not want to go home ; she had adored Catherine, and she preferred Seymour's careless, jovial protection to the severities of her mother's household. Seymour was able to convince the Greys that if properly managed as he knew how, Lady Jane's shadowy claim to the throne might be speedily realized—by so simple a thing as marriage with her cousin Edward, the King. Jane's father, Henry Grey, Marquis of Dorset, pocketed five hundred pounds, and his meek daughter was returned to the care of Seymour's mother in his magnificent establishment in London. Seymour called himself her half-brother—and she was dimly happy there, in her quiet way.

By Christmas-time people's tongues were wagging in earnest. Which of the royal maidens, Elizabeth or Jane, did he mean to put in the dead Queen's place ? Even Mary was remembered in the gossip about his marriage plans, though she had steadfastly refused to countenance any of his doings and was now in retirement at Beaulieu. She had loved Catherine dearly, in spite of their many small differences, but she never quite forgave her for the hasty marriage which was having such far-reaching, disastrous consequences. She regarded Seymour always as no better than a fortune-hunter, and deplored the talk which persistently linked his name with Elizabeth's.

Catherine's life had stood between him and any serious charge regarding Elizabeth. But now Catherine was dead, and his somewhat providential new bachelorhood seemed to put a new aspect on the whole business. Gradually his relations with Elizabeth became the real issue between himself and the watchful Council.

He had thoroughly got round the chicken-headed Mrs. Ashley long ago, for she was never above persuasion in the coin of the realm. She had a romantic soul and (it follows) had a weakness for the gallant figure of the Lord Admiral. It seemed to her that Elizabeth might do much worse, and she said so long and often in Elizabeth's private ear. Her limited intelligence could not compass the political intricacies involved. She adored her handsome

princess—and here was a suitably handsome lover of adequate wealth and position. This was no secret, perilous boy and girl love affair. This was worthy match-making. Let them marry, why not?

Elizabeth's household treasurer, Thomas Parry, was a meddlesome man who presumed on her childhood fondness for him. He liked to think himself in his lady's confidence, and he was fair game for Seymour, running errands and bearing tales shamelessly. Seymour put him up to ask her in an unguarded moment if she would be willing to marry the Lord Admiral providing the Council consented. Elizabeth appeared to consider. She was learning diplomacy fast now in the hard school of experience, and something in Parry's little watchful eyes and bland smile made her cautious. The idea was not a new one to her. *If* the Council consented—? She replied piously that when that time came she would do as God should put into her mind. And Parry dared not press her further.

Her very maids became imbued with the supposed romance, and prattled coyly of the Lord Admiral's suit, until among them they created an atmosphere of knowing complacence over an established love affair that was bound to have an effect on even the most unselfconscious girl, and Elizabeth was at last badgered into blushing at their endless implications. This was gleefully noted and enlarged upon. Parry wagged a playful finger at her when he heard, and obligingly the warm red tide rose again under her delicate skin. Mrs. Ashley looked arch and shook her head. Elizabeth half lost her temper. But only half.

Out of touch with the world, cut off from all Court rumours which were not carefully sifted through his own well-wishers, she had to think of Seymour as the bravest, wittiest, wealthiest, and most popular man in England; a man whom even a princess would be unwise to offend, and whose regard even a Tudor might be proud to have and to hold. His virtues were constantly being bolstered up in her hearing—such of them as could be found at all—and his undeniably splendid figure and ingratiating ways were harped on. She learnt things about him she had never known before, always to his advantage, and was skilfully led on to ask questions about him. She wrote him the most discreet letters—but she smiled as she wrote them. Her cheeks grew pink over his replies. She was young and she was courted. It was all very thrilling.

Seymour had not forgotten the Duke of Somerset all this time. Just what he meant to do about his elder brother, besides overthrow his power and eliminate the post of Protector, his most intimate fellow conspirators did not know. If the Duke resisted he was surely bound for the Tower after Seymour's triumph. But Somerset struck first, and struck hard. And in the middle of January it was Thomas who went to the Tower.

The alleged crime was High Treason. The penalty for that was always death. And the trial was to be as usual a solemn farce.

Seymour retained his haughty spirit throughout the early days of his ordeal, and demanded a public hearing. The salient points of the charges against him—which were thirty-three in all—were his attempt to gain a dominant party for himself by forwarding the marriage of his ward Lady Jane to the King ; his preparations to take the field openly against Somerset and to induce the King to join him in the rebellion ; and his presumptuous design to encroach on the throne itself by an intended marriage with the Princess Elizabeth.

Seymour had talked too much, and too many people knew of his dissatisfaction with the Protector's rule. Testimony was plentiful and explicit. Old Lord Russell with his benign white beard and his pitiless memory told how he had warned the Lord Admiral of dangerous rumours that he contemplated marriage with one of the daughters of Henry VIII—either one—and how Seymour had tacitly admitted it by entering into a violent altercation with him over the probable dowries involved ; and how again he had predicted to him the peril of losing his brother's friendship, to which Seymour replied that he cared not for that. Russell testified that he had insisted to Seymour that his actions invited an actual break with the Protector, who might summarily imprison him if he chose ; and that Seymour had shrugged and vowed that he cared not for that either.

A signed deposition was read relating how Seymour had said of his brother : “Why was he made Protector ? There is no need of a Protector ” ; and how he had declared that he had no need of Somerset's favour and might live better without my Lord Protector's Grace than he could do with him. Seymour's confederate at the Bristol mint told all he knew and a bit more, and saved his own skin thereby.

There was no producible evidence of his supposed intention to kidnap the King into marriage or to start a civil war. The treason, then, proved to be not against the King so much as against the sacred self-created power of the Lord Protector. Thomas insisted wildly on his right to have a private interview with Somerset, but this was denied him, whether with Somerset's consent or by an overwhelming majority in the Council against his natural brotherly feelings Thomas never knew.

Then somehow the whole thing suddenly slewed round until Elizabeth became the main issue. How far had the affair between the Princess and the Lord Admiral gone ? Somerset became more and more anxious to know. He had got brother Thomas where he wanted him at last. He saw a chance to settle the girl also. Two birds with one stone, thought Somerset.

Harington was summoned and examined repeatedly, but they could get very little out of him. He was alleged to have carried letters between Seymour and Elizabeth soon after Catherine's death at Sudeley. He denied it, but spent some dreary time in prison for incurring the suspicion.

Mrs. Ashley and Parry and others of Elizabeth's household were

arrested and removed to London to await an examination, and Sir Robert Tyrwhit, Commissioner of the Council, was put in charge of the establishment at Hatfield. Elizabeth awoke one morning to find them gone. It frightened her. Concerned as she had been about Thomas, she had never dreamed of being drawn into the maelstrom herself. She had lived so remote from Court intrigue, and her young conscience was so clear. But believing that Parry and Mrs. Ashley were already in the Tower, whereas they were merely detained in an obscure part of Westminster, she began to wonder what exaggerations and distortions might be wrung from them, and from others in her service, out of fear of the rack and the block.

Meanwhile she found herself completely at the mercy of Somerset's henchmen, with no one left to turn to who wished her well ; practically a prisoner in what she had come to regard as her own house, with spies set all about her. She had to consider every word she spoke and every look that crossed her expressive face, no matter how goaded to spontaneity. Her first terror had been that now at last Fernando's name would be dragged out into the light through Mrs. Ashley's indiscretion, or some blabbing servant's foolish tattle. But as the inquisition at Hatfield went on, with nothing but Seymour, Seymour, Seymour, all day long, she realized that the Lord Admiral would serve as a red herring, and that he was in serious danger of losing his head. And even in her agony of distress and suspense over Thomas, she was aware of a small, cool under-current of relief. Fernando was safely forgotten. It was Thomas they were after, and only Thomas.

Whatever his private feelings, Tyrwhit took up the cross-examination of his defenceless charge with a will, and wrote extensive reports of the scant results almost daily for Somerset's impatient perusal. He began by reminding her that royal airs were useless now, as she was but a subject after all ; words very similar to those which had chilled the blood of Anne Boleyn only a dozen years before. He then blackened Mrs. Ashley's character and suggested that if Elizabeth would but tell everything at once and give them no further trouble by contradicting the governess's story, it would all be laid to Mrs. Ashley's unfitness for her exalted post, and to Elizabeth's own youth and inexperience. He watched with interest Elizabeth's silent struggle against what he hoped was the temptation to lay before him the expected awful truth ; he waited on tenter-hooks while she wept a little, and controlled herself ; and then she demanded if Mrs. Ashley had confessed anything. All, he told her eagerly. They knew all. It was useless for her to deny the testimony of her household. It would save everybody so much time and trouble if she herself would make no effort now to withhold from them her own confession of the truth.

He was too glib. He made it look too easy. Her instinct, unblunted as a child's by too much contact with the world, told her that so far he knew nothing for certain of what he implied she must admit. He said that he knew all, and yet he taxed her with

nothing in particular, not even with a lying accusation wrung from a frightened underling. His game was to make her commit herself. She saw through that. He was trying to get from her own lips a story to condemn herself and Thomas. And what was there to tell? A few letters—very discreet. A few visits—well enough chaperoned. A few smiles and glances—and for the rest, a hasty slipping behind chairs as he approached, a deft turning of cheeks, a stout push now and then. No, there was nothing to tell.

Elizabeth dried her eyes. She knew where she was now.

“But in no way will she confess any practice by Mrs. Ashley or the cofferer, concerning my Lord Admiral,” wrote Tyrwhit by the light of his midnight candle, after hours spent in trying to persuade Elizabeth that she had been unduly wrought upon by those who had her innocence in their keeping. *“And yet I do see it in her face that she is guilty, and do perceive as yet she will abide more storms ere she will accuse Mrs. Ashley,”* he concluded with cheerful confidence, and piously committed the Protector’s Grace to his loving God, and went to bed and lay awake devising more storms for Elizabeth’s undoing.

It had seemed to them such an ingenious scheme—to frighten a young girl into blaming her elders for allowing her to slip into an indiscretion, in the hope of thus escaping censure herself—and then with pressure brought to bear upon those she herself accused, the thing would be accomplished. But Elizabeth was not taking her cues. She defended herself not by passing on the guilt to other people, but by defending them also on the grounds that there was no guilt anywhere to be fixed. She maintained sturdily that there were simply no secrets to be kept, and that therefore obviously no one was keeping any.

“All I have gotten yet is by gentle persuasion, whereby I do begin to grow with her in credit,” Tyrwhit reported the next day, having again drawn a blank, and added ruefully, *“I do assure your Grace she hath a very good wit and nothing is gotten of her but by great policy.”*

His zeal was fading a little. She was so ready, so unconfused, so level-eyed. She could not be stampeded. Her contempt for his efforts at intimidation or bribery was so disconcertingly visible. Before long he was not above suggesting that nothing more could be got out of her except by the King or by Somerset himself. Which was to say, that if the Duke thought the bullying of this fourteen-year-old girl who could not be terrorized or jockeyed into committing herself was any easy task, he had best come and try it himself.

Somerset did not accept the implied invitation. Instead, he sent Tyrwhit’s wife after him to Hatfield as governess in Mrs. Ashley’s place.

Lady Tyrwhit was no stranger to Elizabeth. She had been much in Catherine’s household since the King’s death, and had gone to Sudeley for the birth of the child. She was of infinitely better blood and breeding than Mrs. Ashley—in fact, the first gentlewoman of rank to be numbered among Elizabeth’s attendants since the Chelsea days. Somerset’s idea was that friendship and affection

might bring down Elizabeth's defences where intimidation and diplomacy had failed.

Things did not work out quite as he had expected. Elizabeth had kept her dignity and reserve before the inquisitors, and she now found an unexpected nervous outlet in a veritable tempest of rage and tears at what she chose to regard as the humiliation of this prompt appointment of a new governess. First, it looked, she said, as though they did not think her fit to behave herself. Secondly, she had been accustomed to wind Mrs. Ashley round her finger, and she was thoroughly spoilt by those months of independence since her self-imposed exile from Catherine's supervision ; she considered it an indignity not to be allowed to regulate her own household. Lady Tyrwhit, who was fond of Elizabeth and did not relish her new responsibilities, was able to see that it was high time a woman of decision and good birth took charge of Henry's red-haired daughter.

So Elizabeth cried all night and lowered all next day. Tyrwhit, caught between the millstones, found his wife in tears because of the treatment she received from the girl she had regarded as a friend, and he declared in exasperation that so far from objecting to the installation of his lady, it behooved her Grace to have two governesses appointed over her instead of one. Tempers were wearing thin at Hatfield.

Meanwhile the Duke of Somerset, sitting Olympian in London, overreached himself. In his laborious attempt to outwit a girl in her early teens he devised a spurious confidential letter to Tyrwhit which the latter was to show to Elizabeth as though in partial betrayal of his master through his admiring sympathy for her ; a letter containing certain rumours and gossipy accusations calculated to bring my lady to her knees at once, begging for a merciful silence henceforth on condition that she confessed all. Tyrwhit was to promise anything in return for any revelations from her. They could not credit, in London, that such guileless innocence was real. She must be made to believe that they believed even more than there was to believe. That way they would get the truth.

Tyrwhit did his part with a straight face. And once more the scheme went all wrong.

Elizabeth read the letter which Tyrwhit professed to have smuggled to her in betrayal of his commission. Its monstrous fabrications made her thin cheeks burn. For the first time she felt the utter helplessness of the individual, however guiltless, against the invisible, creeping poison of public opinion. What to do, what to say, how to hammer home her own flaming honour ! The very nature of the charge was her salvation. There was only one answer to that.

She paused to thank Trywhit gratefully for his kindness in giving her an opportunity to defend herself from this wicked smirching of her maidenhood. And then, in the face of his protests and stipulations, and bearing loyally in mind that she was not

supposed for his sake to have seen the letter, she took up her pen and dauntlessly addressed the Duke of Somerset on her own behalf.

My lord—

Your great gentleness and good will towards me, as well in this thing as in other things, I do understand, for the which, even as I ought, so do I give you most humble thanks ; and whereas your Lordship willeth and counselleth me, as an earnest friend, to declare what I know in this matter, and also to write what I have declared to Master Tyrwhit, I shall most willingly do it. . . .

First in all politeness to put the Protector thoroughly in the wrong and out of countenance with himself by an assumption of ingenuous trust, which might or might not win credence with him—then to set down all the same well-worn facts about the meddlesome Parry's inquiries as to her intentions regarding the Lord Admiral if the Council made no objections to his suit—they had been over that again and again, the Duke would be sick of that—then a long and tiresomely wordy reiteration of Mrs. Ashley's discretion and loyal sentiments toward the King's Majesty, the Lord Protector's Grace, and the Council, to try him further—and finally, having told him nothing which he had not had from Tyrwhit several times over, openly to dare the Protector into a course which he would hardly have the courage or the wit to adventure—and so she came to her lyric conclusion.

. . . These be the things which I both declared to Master Tyrwhit, and also whereof my conscience beareth me witness, which I would not for all earthly things offend in anything ; for I know I have a soul to save as well as other folks have, wherefore I will above all things have respect unto this same. If there be any more things which I can remember, I will either write it myself or cause Master Tyrwhit to write it. Master Tyrwhit and others have told me that there goeth rumours abroad which be greatly both against my honour and honesty (which above all other things I esteem) which be these ; that I am in the Tower ; and with child by the Lord Admiral. My lord, these be shameful slanders, for the which, besides the great desire I have to see the King's Majesty, I shall most heartily desire your lordship that I may come to the Court after your first determination ; that I may show myself there as I am. Written in haste, from Hatfield, this 28th of January.

Your assured friend to my little power,

ELIZABETH.

She had him nicely, and he knew it. Unaided, inexperienced and so young, she had hit upon the one sure refutation of that infamous charge—publicity. *Let me come to Court.* The challenge rang out fearlessly from her clear conscience. Let them watch her,

those knowing Court matrons whose merciless eyes she was not afraid to face in her virgin health. Bring her to London, she dared him, to meet the highest of her traducers on their own ground. Bring her to London, within reach of the puzzled young King, whose mind was being slowly poisoned against her.

Somerset was properly routed, and he had brought it on himself. He could only fall back vengefully on her servants.

Parry and Mrs. Ashley were packed off to the Tower and put through a severe questioning. It became rather a dreadful business. Parry, with the fear of the rack upon him, grew garrulous. Then Mrs. Ashley lost her head and babbled. Their combined story now made out Elizabeth at best a shameless, vulgar flirt ; Seymour a conscienceless, would-be seducer of a maid in his wife's keeping ; and Catherine a stupid, jealous woman.

Parry's signed confession stated explicitly that Mrs. Ashley had once said to him that she would wish Elizabeth to be Seymour's wife above all men living ; that Lady Somerset had more than once reproached the governess for too much laxness in overseeing the conduct of the Lord Admiral with the Princess ; that Mrs. Ashley had tush-tushed the stories he, Parry, had brought her of evil reports of the Lord Admiral—how he was not only a covetous man and an oppressor, but also an evil, jealous man, and had cruelly and dishonourably used the Queen ; but Mrs. Ashley, an obstinate woman, had said she would wish Elizabeth to none before him, for all that. Parry also told the story which was first told to him by Mrs. Ashley of that last evening at Chelsea, when Catherine had come upon Elizabeth in Seymour's arms, and had spoken angrily and gone to bed in tears, as had my Lady Elizabeth also. Parry did not choose to consider, now that his tongue was loosened by fear, how he had sworn to the governess at that time that he would rather be pulled by wild horses than tell it to anybody. And he was unable to remember clearly whether Elizabeth had finally gone on her own decision or been sent away.

For all Mrs. Ashley's congenital foolishness, she was a little more steadfast than plump, craven Parry. She would say nothing until she was brought face to face with him, and he stoutly adhered to all the intimacies he had written out ; whereupon she called him a false wretch for having revealed what he had promised her never to confess to death—largely her own indiscreet conversations with him on matters they had no business to discuss—and then herself became endlessly loquacious about those morning romps at Chelsea.

Their two signed confessions were sent to Hatfield to be used as a lever on Elizabeth's stubborn reticence. When Tyrwhit placed them triumphantly in her hands, he noted that the first thing she did was to scrutinize both signatures carefully, as though doubtful of their authenticity. Then she read the closely written pages to the end, flushed with shame and resentment at the needless, heedless idiocy of the things set down, futile and ridiculous details. It looked so much worse in writing—those harmless embarrassments at Chelsea. She had half forgotten . . .

But at the bottom of her mind there was still a small substratum of relief, when she reached the end of Mrs. Ashley's document without finding what would have been the ultimate outrage—betrayal of Fernando's part in that last year at Chelsea. There was no mention of him anywhere. In her gratitude, she laid the omission to Mrs. Ashley's loyalty and discretion—whereas one leading question in that direction would doubtless have brought the whole thing out in a torrent of damning particulars and conjecture. But there was no one in London to ask such a question ; Seymour was the only quarry whose scent had been taught to the hounds.

Tyrwhit was misled by Elizabeth's hot cheeks and breathless indignation into a hope that she might be brought to terms at last by the evidence of her own servants. But the next day she rallied more than royally and set down a confession of her own ; not a mere letter of protest this time, but a business-like account along the lines of the models from the Tower ; she could always pare down her flowing rhetoric when she did not want it as a screen for her mind to work behind. There was nothing new in the document, however—and Tyrwhit had to admit it. "*They all sing one song,*" he lamented to the Duke, "*and so I think they would not do unless they had set the note before, for surely they would confess, or else they could not so well agree.*" No one could conceive the possibility of their telling the comparatively harmless truth above a signature, and thus inevitably agreeing with each other.

For three weeks Elizabeth had held her own, single-handed, against the craftiest brains in the country. By their own acknowledgment, they got nothing out of her to her own disadvantage, and they could prove nothing against her by anyone else. But try as she would, she could not get Mrs. Ashley back. Somerset's only possible retaliation at the moment was the refusal to withdraw the usurping Lady Tyrwhit from the post of governess.

"*She beginneth now a little to droop,*" wrote the watchful Tyrwhit on February 19th, "*by reason that she heareth my Lord Admiral's houses be dispersed. And my wife telleth me now that she cannot bear to hear him discommended but she is ready to make answer therein ; and so she has not been accustomed to do, unless Mrs. Ashley were touched, whereunto she was ready to make answer vehemently.*"

Elizabeth's first caution about showing any feeling for Seymour was giving way under a growing anxiety. The distribution of his property was a sure sign that he was doomed. It was impossible for her to communicate with him, of course, if she had wished to or dared, and she received no word from him. She supposed that he defended her, which he had no opportunity to do, and she spoke out loyally on his behalf. Round her heart a cold terror was stealing. Thomas would go to the block. Well, Anne Boleyn had gone to the block. And if these things they sought to prove could not be consistently unproved, what of Anne Boleyn's daughter. . . .

She faced it at last one long black night at Hatfield, lying with the coverlet pulled up to her chin, her eyes on the greying square

of the window while the haggard summer dawn came creeping—faced it and knew that she was fighting for her life. One false step now, one unguarded word, and she would follow Thomas to the Tower—perhaps even to the scaffold. She was only a girl, not a queen—but she stood near to the throne. Let them contrive to prove only that she had encouraged Thomas, that she was in any way a complacent though passive partner in his treasonous schemes or shared his treasonous ambitions—and she might share his death also.

Death.

Her eyes were wide and tearless on the faint outline of the window. But she had only begun to live ! There were things, enchanting, tremendous things she had yet to know and do ! Thomas—even Thomas had not finished living. But Thomas must lie now under sentence of death, watching his numbered days drop one by one into eternity, until that last hour would strike, the last hour of warmth and breath in this bright world one knew the look of, among the dear solid possessions one knew the feel of, which would still be there, impassive, inanimate, when one had gone . . . to what. . . .

But one must live ! Death was a thing which came at the end, when one was tired or ill, and one's curiosities were all at rest and one's intentions and desires—some of them—had been achieved. Or death was an accident, a mysterious act of God, sudden, swift, and merciful, like Fernando's. But this other—this mere *stopping*, between one breath and another, with one's eyes wide open, perhaps, and one's heart at full beat . . . this *blotting out*, unfinished, with things still left to seek and to enjoy . . . this lopping off of heads, by a power not Omnipotent and a will not Divine. . . .

Elizabeth bit her knuckles in the dark. The Council would send Thomas to his death for challenging its power to kill him—and failing ; for aspiring to a greater power of his own which might have crushed and killed the Council. Well, Thomas had staked his head and lost the game. But she who had not challenged anybody, she who had been quiet and good and happy in the country with her books and needlework—she was caught in the same net. And where was her defence ?

Almost she thanked God in that dismal dawn that Fernando was safe in his grave, and had known only those happy days while Catherine lived. His anguish now at her own peril would have surely drawn him into it too. She shuddered to think of Fernando a prisoner in the Tower awaiting the headsman, as Thomas was—and then tried to shut out with her desperate palms before her eyes the vivid, stabbing memory of dark curls, dark eyes, and that curving upper lip. . . . Ah, but he was better where he was. Suppose he had lived till these disastrous days—lived perhaps to see her die as Anne Boleyn had died. . . .

Gripping the coverlet in the twilight, she sought desperately for any shield against the shadow which would surely overtake her if things went on as Somerset intended. Perhaps—yes, perhaps if

she could reach the people, she, King Harry's Protestant daughter, might still be preserved. She carried her birthright in her face—her Tudor grandfather's beaky nose and long chin ; her Yorkist grandmother's reddish fairness ; her father's vibrant charm and dauntlessness. Even to the long, bitter end of him he had been bluff King Hal to the common people, the mob, the folk who made the cheering gala crowds through which royal processions passed. Mary they would not love, for she was Catholic and half a Spaniard. Edward they could not love, for he would never look a king. But she—she should have been the son, and she could win and hold them if she got the chance. She belonged to them ; she was theirs, born English, like them ; they were hers to rule, because they had loved her father, and so, in spite of everything, had she.

She knew well enough how she stood with the simple country folk round about the houses where she had lived, in Hertfordshire and Buckingham. Babes kicked and crowded as she passed by, and their mothers gave her broad, shy smiles of welcome ; small children ran breathless and worshipful beside her stirrup, or put out grubby, reverent hands to touch her skirt, or proffered drooping, squeezed bouquets of field flowers ; when she stooped and spoke to one of them, or pinned the flowers to her gown, it made village history. The men, from farm louts to gaffers, stood bareheaded and gawking and dazzled beneath her smile. There was no doubt how her tenants loved her.

But she knew, too, that Somerset would not hesitate to spread his lies beyond the Court. That dark, mysterious mass of humanity which made London—the turbulent Catholic element in the North—the isolated, inflammable West—what could they know of her, and what must they not have heard, during these last few humiliating weeks ? Except for a hundred-odd souls she could call her own, all England lay open to Somerset's vile innuendoes linking her with the Lord Admiral. Such things grew and grew as they travelled. They would make her out the veriest wanton. She was being forever smirched in the eyes of the multitude. She would lose them—they would never back her up if they were allowed to believe these things. Something must be done. The Duke of Somerset should see at least that it was beneath the dignity of the royal line that such rumours should circulate unchecked. He must be made to call home his own lies.

She wrote again next day, nagging him about the restoration of her beloved Mrs. Ashley. But tucked away among the ambiguous pronouns and rolling sentences of her letter was statesmanship.

My lord—

Having received your lordship's letters, I perceive in them your good will toward me, because you declare to me plainly your mind in this thing, and again for that you would not wish that I should do anything that should not seem good unto the Council ; for the which thing I give you most hearty thanks. And whereas I understand that you take in evil part the letters that I did write

unto your lordship, I am very sorry that you should take them so, for my mind was to declare unto you plainly as I thought in that thing ; which I did also the more willingly because (as I write to you) you desired me to be plain with you in all things. And as concerning that point that you write : that I seem to stand in mine own wit in being so well assured of mine own self, I did assure me of myself no more than I trust the truth shall try. And to say that which I knew of myself, I did not think should have displeased the Council or your Grace. And surely the cause why I was sorry that there should be any such about me [Lady Tyrwhit] was because I thought the people would say I deserved through my lewd demeanour to have such a one ; not that I mislike anything that your lordship or the Council shall think good, for I know that you and the Council are charged with me ; nor that I take upon me to rule myself, for I know they are the most deceived that trusteth most in themselves ; wherefore I trust you shall never find that fault in me.

Here she paused, biting the quill. His own words, back in his teeth—but with a suitable humility of phrase—and now, appearing still to harp on the governess controversy, and with it as a blind, she must make her point. Her pen travelled on, more slowly. He had offered to wreak vengeance on any gossiping goodies or gaffers she could point to as having blown upon her fair name, rightly doubting her ability to produce any flagrant offenders among her own circle of loyal retainers. But the ducking-stool and pillory were not what she had in mind. He had begun it ; and from him must come its ultimate denial. She would not be satisfied with less. And the riddance of the governess imposed upon her by the Council was only a first step in the game.

. . . to the which thing [she wrote, quite clear in her own mind as to which thing she meant] I do not see that your Grace has made any direct answer at this time ; and seeing they make so evil reports already, shall be but an increasing of their evil tongues. Howbeit, you did write that if I would bring forth any that had reported it, you and the Council would see it redressed ; which thing, though I can easily do it, I would be loath to do it, for because it is mine own cause ; and again that should be but a breeding of an evil name of me, that I am glad to punish them ; and so get the evil will of the people, which thing I would be loath to have. But if it might so seem good unto your lordship and the rest of the Council to send forth a proclamation into the countries that they refrain their tongues, declaring how the tales be but lies, it should make the people think that you and the Council have great regard that no such rumours should be spread of any of the King's Majesty's sisters, as I am, though unworthy ; and also I should think myself to receive such friendship at your hands as you have promised me, although your lordship hath shown me great already. Howbeit, I am ashamed to ask it any

more because I see you are not so well minded thereunto. And as concerning that you say I give folks occasion to think, in refusing the good to uphold the evil, I am not of so simple understanding ; nor would I that your Grace should have so evil an opinion of me as to think that I have so little respect for mine own honesty that I would maintain it if I had [not] sufficient promise of the same ; and so your Grace shall prove me when it comes to the point. And thus I bid you farewell, desiring God always to assist you in all your affairs. Written in haste, From Hatfield, this 21 of February. Your assured friend, to my little power,

ELIZABETH.

Thus the Duke of Somerset, not exactly a guileless man, was actually diddled into issuing such a proclamation. And the good folk of England, that broad middle stratum of honest freemen who made its sturdy backbone, east and west and north and south, shook their heads and pursed their lips over the sad plight of King Harry's hapless maid at the mercy of a dissolute Court.

It became only too plain that Seymour's stout demand for an open trial could not be granted without incriminating either Edward or Elizabeth as conspirators—and one of them was the King, and the other could not be caught out. It might result, too, in revolt against the Protector's tyranny, or in Seymour's acquittal, which would be equally ruinous to Somerset now. Seymour's enemies could only fall back on Henry's reliable device, the Bill of Attainder, which was simply a document read before Parliament declaring the victim guilty and his possessions forfeit to the Crown. As a matter of form, it was read three times, but no opposition was possible, and no proper trial was conducted.

The Duke had gone too far now ever to turn back. Even if he had wished to save his brother at the last moment, the pressure from the anti-Seymour faction—led by the Earl of Warwick—had become too much for him. Certainly he had his uneasy moments as to the possible consequences to himself of this unseemly fratricide. It was too late. Thomas alive or Thomas dead had become the Protector's Nemesis. But perhaps Thomas dead would be safer.

They lost no time about it. He was beheaded on the twentieth of March. Contrary to etiquette among even innocent persons at the hour of execution, he made no pious speech on the scaffold, and died unresigned and unforgiving.

IX

The Tyrwhits watched her cruelly when they brought the news of Seymour's death. Her face could not turn whiter these days, but not even her thin, nervous fingers betrayed her. She listened in silence, passively, to their story ; how he had defended himself hotly as long as there was a chance for him to speak ; how then he had begged to see his brother alone and been denied ; how during his last hours he had contrived to write letters to herself and Mary,

concealed them in the soles of his soft shoes and worn them there to the scaffold ; how his servant had been detected in the act of removing them and would doubtless hang.

They waited, cat-like, and she the mouse. Still her lips did not unclose. The letters, Tyrwhit added, since she would not ask, had been destroyed at once, and no one knew what was written—unless perhaps the Lord Protector. . . . She nodded ever so little—doubtless the Protector had satisfied himself—her eyes strayed away indifferently from Tyrwhit's face to the window.

A March thaw had come, and the great trees in Hatfield park dripped dismally on to sodden brown turf streaked with old snow. Thin, cold sunlight filtered through bare boughs, drawing tree-skeletons on the ground. It was a dreary world she saw from that window.

Lady Tyrwhit's quiet voice ventured somewhat non-committal sympathy.

"He was a gallant fellow to look upon," she sighed into the silence, "and a witty one to listen to."

"Much wit and little judgment," said Elizabeth.

It was all they got from her that day.

Then illness came upon her, and her weedy young strength collapsed completely while her tattered nerves took toll. She lay on her bed half-dead, and the endless, terrible tears ran slowly down her swollen face into the pillow. Rumours crept about the countryside and into the Court that she was terribly diseased—dying, even.

Somerset was frightened, though he had longed to be rid of her. He sent the royal physicians, Dr. Bill and Dr. Wendy ; he hastily prepared and forwarded to her her long-delayed letters patent, ratifying her inheritance under her father's will, to ease her mind of all pecuniary worries ; he even restored to her at last the sadder and wiser Mrs. Ashley, and finally Parry, too.

In the late summer of 1549 Elizabeth sat up and looked around her dizzily at a changed world. She found herself alone and ill, friendless, nearly hopeless, with everything swept away that had made life the warm, thrilling adventure that she loved.

There was Mrs. Ashley back again, to mother her and fuss, though Elizabeth had come unwillingly to appreciate the wisdom of Lady Tyrwhit who remained with her also, and who was firm and kind, but cool. To everyone's mystification, Elizabeth clung pathetically to Mrs. Ashley. They said the governess must have known even more than she had told ; they said it was some base gratitude for some unguessable discretion which bound Elizabeth to the woman now ; they said she paid with her royal favour for some tremendous future silence. There arose endless speculation as to what had not been revealed after all in those shocking confessions. The old myth of a child surreptitiously born and destroyed went round again, and again died unproved.

It was not long in dawning on Mrs. Ashley for what Elizabeth was grateful. She preened herself, good, foolish woman, tenacious of her adored charge's mistaken obligation. Why bother to explain

that she had never once thought of Fernando ? He had been driven clean out of her head by all the to-do about the Lord Admiral ; they had asked questions only about the Lord Admiral ; the page boy, dead for over a year, had long ceased to signify in her fluffy mind. But she soon saw that Elizabeth considered it clever and loyal of her, not to have spoken of him. Mrs. Ashley had never said much to Parry about Fernando, and he had luckily forgotten that little. Everyone had always been so sure of Seymour. And now Elizabeth apparently felt that she and Mrs. Ashley shared the real secret still ; they two alone, between them.

Mrs. Ashley, mindful of that old taboo on Fernando's very name, soon convinced herself that even if they had cross-examined her about him too she would never, never have told. . . . And so she sipped the honey of Elizabeth's recovered fondness greedily.

Elizabeth, aware that she must live down the Lord Admiral, retired into her books and needlework ; dressed plainly, talked and wrote piously, along Reformation lines. An open sorrow for the execution of her showy suitor would not have been either safe or subtle. But she allowed them to see her changed ; sobered, penitent, and very innocent ; a simple, trusting maid, victimized by an ambitious man.

The future looked barren and grey. Thomas had been at least an excitement. He was something to go on with. At least he had been a survival of the old gay days at Chelsea, when Catherine was alive and loving, and one counted for something in one's little world. There was a lilt and a zest about Thomas—he made for colour. And he said enchanting, dangerous things. In a way—his own way—he filled a void. But now he was dead too. They were both dead ; her first love, and her first—mistake. She was a few weeks short of sixteen.

PART THREE PRINCESS

I

HE rode straightly, her eyes on the horse's ears. Her long hands, ungloved to show their beauty, were quiet and sure with the rein. She wore a black velvet cloak, caught close at the throat with a plain gold cord, and beneath the cloak a simple gown of dark green cloth, its full skirt discreetly draped across the stirrups which held her narrow feet.

The great hood of the cloak hung down her back, for the spring day was mild ; and there was only a small dark cap, unjewelled, lined with crisp white which showed at the edge, to cover her hair. Some two hundred ladies followed in her cavalcade, and all of them were more richly dressed than she was. Her nose was royal, and her head was high. And under the plain green gown her heart beat wildly. Elizabeth Tudor, seventeen, passed through the gazing streets of London on her first state visit to the Court of Edward VI.

The people lined her way, friendly enough, but curious, staring, and full of comment. She had not been seen in London lately, and many of them had never caught a glimpse of her before. She was the younger one, and they had heard strange things of her. She was the mysterious, disgraceful daughter of that Nan Boleyn who had so ill-used the first Catherine and her lawful child. Still—she was Protestant, and she was almost pretty. The little King was said to regard her highly. They waited, non-committal, till she came abreast of them, her eyes modestly on her horse's ears ; beheld her with approval of her fresh maidenhood and with some surprise, and let her go from them without any enthusiastic demonstration.

But the conviction grew in the streets of London that day that one could never believe quite all one heard. The King had sent for Nan Boleyn's daughter, and her hair was red and she rode royally. Some of them could remember beaky old Henry VII, or thought they could, and they said she had his nose and chin. A decent, well-grown lass ; flat-bosomed, but holding herself like a Tudor. Yes, they liked her. And they wondered what was toward, at Court, to bring her suddenly among them.

Elizabeth was wondering, too.

The summons had been peremptory and unexpected. For two years she had remained in total eclipse, most of the time at Hatfield,

which was now her very own house, gift of the Crown for the duration of her life ; and most of the time she had been too ill to care what happened next. A rumour reached her in October, 1549, that the Duke of Somerset's power had been broken by Dudley, Earl of Warwick, his rival in the Council Chamber ; then definite news that Somerset was in the Tower, a scant seven months after he had sent brother Thomas to the block ; then in the spring came another story that he was out again, but stripped of his lands and not allowed to see the King ; and later still they said he was readmitted to the Privy Council and had got most of his wealth restored ; till Elizabeth held her aching head in two thin hands and moaned that she cared not what they did in London so that they left her in peace.

This was not quite true, though the flame of life burned very low in her throughout 1550. She and Edward corresponded somewhat wordily that summer, and he asked for her portrait. Her reply was a carefully penned, much calculated work of art, rounded off with a slightly mixed Latin tag, which caused the King to nod solemn approval of her learning, at no loss for the sense of it, at least :

Like as the rich man that daily gathereth riches to riches, and to one bag of money layeth a great sort till it comes to infinite, so methinks your Majesty, not being sufficed with many benefits and gentlenesses showed to me afore this time, doth now increase them in asking and desiring where you may bid and command ; requiring a thing not worthy the desiring for itself, but made worthy for your Highness' request. My picture, I mean, in which, if the inward good mind toward your Grace might as well be declared as the outward face and countenance shall be seen, I would not have tarried the commandment, but prevented it ; nor have been the last to grant but the first to offer it. For the face I grant I might well blush to offer ; but the mind I shall never be ashamed to present. For though from the grace of the picture the colours may fade by time, may give by weather, may be spotted by chance ; yet the other, nor time with her swift wings shall overtake, nor the misty clouds with their lowerings may darken, nor chance with her slippery foot may overthrow. Of this, although yet the proof could not be great because the occasions hath been but small, notwithstanding as a dog hath a day, so may I perchance have time to declare it in deeds, where now I do write them but in words. And further, I shall most humbly beseech your Majesty that when you shall look on my picture, you will vouchsafe to think that, as you have but the outward shadow of the body afore you, so my inward mind wishes that the body itself were oftener in your presence ; howbeit, because both my so being I think could do your Majesty little pleasure, though myself great good, and again because I see as yet not the time agreeing thereunto, I shall learn to follow this saying of Horace : *Feras non culpes quod vitari non potest.* And thus I will, troubling your Majesty, I fear, end with my most humble

thanks. Beseeching God long to preserve you to his honour, to your comfort, to the realm's profit, and to my joy. From Hatfield, this 15 day of May. Your Majesty's most humble sister,

ELIZABETH.

As usual, her nascent statesmanship hid behind her rolling sentences. She hinted that with her old enemy the Protector under a cloud and Warwick in the ascendant, who bore her no ill will so far as she knew, Edward might now be allowed a few opinions of his own ; and that this might result in a request for her presence at Court, as well as for her picture.

Her indefatigable mind already forced on her convalescent body the realization that it would be well to show herself at Court as soon as possible now—to appear among their whisperings, calm and clear of conscience, unscathed by Somerset's persecutions, a little pale, perhaps, and pathetically good—to face Somerset on his own ground at last, but magnanimously, for his own diminishment. Her implacable sense of her own place in England's scheme of things whipped up her weary spirit. She had won. There must be no skulking and malingering in sylvan retreats, once the time came to show herself as she was—the victim of an overbearing tyrant now in disfavour himself. The pendulum had swung. Life gave no quarter, ever. She must go to Court.

She was genuinely fond of Edward, or had been when he was small, for they were nearly enough of an age to share the same tutors and the same games, were trained in the same hybrid religion, and had the same studious habits. She knew that Edward's attitude toward Mary was always more filial than fraternal—and that lately Mary's obstinate Catholicism had opened a serious breach between them. Edward was not yet fourteen, and he had got religion very badly. Elizabeth was aware as she entered London that March day in 1551 that at least she was on the right side about religion.

Well, she had wanted to come and now it had happened, unexpectedly, and she found it rather frightening. Warwick had something up his sleeve. There had been flying rumours all winter that he was negotiating her marriage abroad. Her chin jerked higher each time she heard. Let him try ! Marry now, two short steps from the throne, with Edward so frail and Mary so old, and both of them almost sure to be childless ? Marry, when she had proved herself cleverer than Thomas and had worsted Somerset entirely ? It was the Earl of Warwick this time, was it, and with a foreign marriage. Very well, let *him* try !

The old resolve, unchanged since the days of her father's lifetime, since her first baby boast to Mary at Hertford : *I will not marry anybody.* Let them do what they liked with her, she would never marry abroad. She had learned recently that they could do a great deal to a recalcitrant princess. Rank was small protection if one was only a girl, and men's stakes were desperate. Somerset had wanted her life because she and Thomas might be in his way. Well, Thomas was finished, and now Somerset was in Warwick's

way. And she? Why should Warwick want to be rid of her? He had not got a scheming brother.

Surely she was doing no harm, at Hatfield. But—marriage, said the Earl of Warwick. And did he think she would resist his way less than Somerset's? Little did he know! Marriage or the block—by either one she would forfeit England. She was prepared to fight Warwick as she had fought Somerset—and if he threatened her, then let him realize: as soon the scaffold and the axe as exile now from England. . . . And then she would catch her breath, looking back, as it were, at her own high words.

To die now, when she had begun to win? To die—in any case? Death, rather than any marriage, even with a young and—malleable man? She looked at it askance. Ah, but one could say so! One could loudly say so, and with great conviction. One could stick to it, one could go to prison, one could receive a death sentence, even—then there would be an uproar in the country—the Council would not know *what* to do—the people might rise against them. . . . Assuredly one must say so, if it came to that. It might be a risk—but saying would not kill!

She was to lie at St. James's that night, across the Park from Whitehall where the Court was. Last time she was at St. James's she had been still under Catherine Parr's protecting wing, and her father was still very much alive, and angry with her. She remembered St. James's with a sort of homesickness. Those were good days, before poor Edward had had to be King; good even in that year of banishment which followed the dreadful scene in Catherine's parlour at Whitehall. Her father had forgiven her, a little, before he died—that was Catherine's work. How Catherine had smoothed things and kept people placated and kind. If Catherine had lived, perhaps a great many things would never have happened. If Catherine had borne a son and lived, perhaps Thomas too had lived. . . .

The sturdy red brick portals of St. James's were before her. It was never home, of course, as Hatfield had become home; she had not been there often enough in her childhood to love the place. But she recalled that the mantelpiece in the presence chamber bore a lovers' knot and the initials H and A—because her father had rebuilt the house for Anne Boleyn, they said. As Elizabeth dismounted in the courtyard she was thinking that presumably the initials were still there; presumably would always be there. Her young mouth hardened. She had not thought of Anne Boleyn for a long time.

The next day it was Mary's turn to enter London in state. She rode from her house at Wanstead, through Fleet Street straight to Whitehall.

Mary would be thirty-five in a month, and all her youth had drained away long ago. After a few years of comparative peace, she faced a new battle now, for the religion that was part of her blood and bone. The Protector had started the trouble, before his fall. Mass was abolished by an Act of Parliament, and Cranmer's

Book of Common Prayer was imposed on the country at large. People suffered fines, imprisonment, and death for adhering to the old faith, and there were county uprisings ruthlessly checked by the Protector's agents.

Hidden away at Beaulieu or at Wanstead, Mary had kept very quiet, hoping to be forgotten, or at least ignored, while her household chaplains openly continued the Catholic observances. But Somerset began to interfere with that, of course. He felt that he had settled Elizabeth, or very nearly, and he had done for brother Thomas. Now he would bring Mary to heel.

Mary turned as always to the Emperor for support, and Charles fell into one of his furies. Wasn't it enough, he demanded of the quaking English ambassador, that England should lose its own soul, but it must try to wreck other people's souls too? Wasn't it enough that his aunt Catherine should have been ill-treated and cast off by the old King, but now his cousin Mary must be persecuted by Henry's survivors? And he swore he had rather Mary died a thousand deaths than forsook her faith which was his faith also—and added shrewdly that Edward was too young to have opinions of his own. Finally, having thoroughly lost his temper as only a naturally cold man can do, he threatened war if she were not instantly left to herself in religious matters. Somerset pulled in his horns, and Mary seemed to have won.

But presently when the Earl of Warwick had clapped Somerset into the Tower he himself took up the matter of the Reformation. Neither of this precious pair was moved by any strong religious convictions of his own, and Somerset had a Catholic wife who was a friend of Mary's. But Protestantism seemed to them the card to play in their sanguinary game of power.

Mary, whose faith was a real and precious thing, had fought them for two years with her back against the wall. There were alternatives, of course, to this endless, bloodless combat—headlong flight to the Continent under the Emperor's protection, or a Catholic state marriage abroad. She who thirty years ago had been the Emperor's affianced bride, stooped to contemplate escape into his domain as a dowerless refugee from persecution in her own land. Charles sent ships which hovered timidly off the east coast of England, hoping to avoid the notice of the ships sent by the suspicious Council to watch them; until the admiral of the putative rescue fleet, a cautious man, saw that even though they didn't know quite what to do about her they meant to keep Mary in England. So he went away and left her there, fighting her losing cause, like her mother before her.

Charles himself was ageing and ill, his Empress had been dead more than ten years, and he showed no inclination to marry again. But Mary sometimes dwelt miserably on the idea of that childhood betrothal of hers in 1522; if it had held good she would be safe and cherished and unassailable now in the Catholic Imperial Court at Brussels. The Portuguese had offered more money with their princess than the English could afford, and in 1522 Charles was

selling himself to the highest bidder ; so he had married the Infanta Isabella instead, and now she was dead, and Mary had become a withered virgin with a pride of martyrdom outweighing her pride of royalty.

The young King, who was equally pious in the new religion which was all he knew, took an active part in the contest and wept because she would not see the light—his light. Early in 1551 Mary had written to him with reckless firmness :

. . . Albeit your Majesty (God be praised) hath at these years as much understanding and more, than is commonly seen in that age, yet considering you do hear but one part (your Highness not offended) I would be a suitor to the same that till you were grown to more perfect years it might stand with your pleasure to stay, in matters touching the soul. So undoubtedly should your Majesty know more, and hear others, and nevertheless be at your liberty, and do your will and pleasure. And whatsoever your Majesty hath conceived of me, either by letters to your Council or by their report, I trust in the end to prove myself as true to you as any subject within your realm, and will by no means stand in argument with your Majesty, but in most humble wise beseech you even for God's sake to suffer me as your Highness hath done hitherto. It is for no worldly respect I desire it, God is my judge ; but rather than to offend my conscience I would desire of God to lose all that I have, and also my life ; and nevertheless live and die your humble sister and true subject. Thus, after pardon craved of your Majesty for my rude and bold writing, I beseech Almighty God to preserve the same with honour, with as long continuance of health and life as ever had noble King. From Beaulieu, the third of February. Your Majesty's most humble and unworthy sister,

MARY.

There it stood. Flatly, she offered them her life for her conscience, and she was prepared in a sort of exaltation of inflexible purpose to sacrifice herself to her ultimate principles. She had seen her mother martyred as surely as any pious victim at the stake ; Catherine died prematurely old, and broken-hearted—obstinate, and *always right*. Then let her daughter perish, too, more spectacularly, just as obstinate, and *right*.

She saw no future, anyway, but some terrifying state marriage with a foreign, perhaps even a Protestant, prince ; or else years of obscurity and persecution in England as the King's recusant sister. She had hardly raised her eyes to the throne. No woman had ever ruled England alone. Her Yorkist grandmother Elizabeth was summarily married by that energetic usurper Henry VII, who thereby established the Tudor dynasty by uniting her hereditary claim with his own right of conquest. Mary was wearily sure that if Edward should die young and leave her Queen, some ambitious male must instantly pounce on her and her inheritance. Her ageing

spirit, her sickly body, quailed at the idea of ruling England, quailed again at the obligation of marriage. She had little enough to live for. The Spanish fanatic in her was ready to show them how to die.

Sad and tired and hopeless, grim and middle-aged, Mary rode toward Westminster. The ladies and gentlemen of her noble train were richly dressed and clanked with rosaries and crosses—a defiant display of the faith to which their mistress had pledged her royal martyrdom. The murmurous populace at the roadside eyed them respectfully, but without enthusiasm—London itself was by now distinctly Protestant in feeling. She was not young and she was plain, and she flaunted the emblems of her forbidden creed. Even those who remembered Catherine of Aragon with pity were silent and anxious now. Her daughter was proving to be a tactless, intractable woman, too. They wondered somewhat apprehensively what would become of her at that strictly Protestant court ; but they wished her no harm, poor lady.

At Whitehall, she was conducted with ceremony to the Council Chamber. The King was represented as ill and did not appear. Mary, who had hoped for his support during the interview, faced his assembled deputies alone. She was sullen and quivering with nerves. The Council pointed out to her that for a while his Majesty had suffered her to hear Mass in her household with forbearance, but could countenance the daily commission of a soul to damnation no longer. Besides—and here was the root of the matter—if the King's sister defied the royal wishes and defied the Council, and presumed to order her household as she chose, it gave other people inconvenient ideas. As the King's sister, she was expected to be the last to set at naught a royal command. It didn't look well. It was a bad example.

But they laboured with her in vain ; tact, temper, threats, conciliation, all were useless, as they had been years before with Catherine in the divorce case. She stood before them, a little, sallow-faced woman, drawn as if with perpetual pain, her ugly hands unsteady, gripping the rosary that hung at her waist, and they could do nothing with her. She was of the blood, and could hardly be dragged off to prison. So at last they had to let her go.

She rode away as she had come, that same afternoon, and spent the night at her town house in Clerkenwell. The next day she retired to Beaulieu, by no means victorious but at least undefeated still. They had not demanded the ultimate price she was prepared to pay, and she had won a respite. Her sense of chagrin at being cheated of a precious martyrdom dimmed her half-triumph with anti-climax.

The opportune arrival of another blast of imperial wrath the next day served to temper the zeal of the Council further. The Emperor might be getting feeble, but he was still the Emperor. They did not want a war. To his great distress, Edward was advised to let the matter drop for the present.

II

While Mary travelled drearily northward into Essex, Elizabeth crossed St. James's Park toward Whitehall, her way spread with the fine white sand of royalty, to a ceremonious welcome at Court—the King's sister in good standing. She and Mary were doomed to perpetual rivalry in spite of themselves. If one was down the other must be up. Elizabeth knew how to take advantage of Mary's weaknesses. Mary had a taste for sumptuous clothes, rich food, all the decadent softness and luxury of Rome. During Elizabeth's stay at Court this time, her theatrical simplicity of dress and behaviour was much commented upon. Was this sedate maid, learned, unassuming, mindful of appearances, the intriguing minx Thomas Seymour was supposed to have courted?

Meanwhile she was watching Warwick. People said he had never recovered from his grave illness last summer, but he was still in his fifties, and the Dudleys were a handsome lot. He danced well and conversed amusingly. Casually seen, he would have been approved by even the exacting Elizabeth, but there was nothing casual in the attention she bestowed upon his doings. She saw that he and Somerset were polite to each other, with a courtesy thick as cream. But it was plain to her that now Warwick was Protector in everything except the title.

Apparently he needed her, and meant her to like him. Somerset had never troubled about that, and it added to Warwick's dangerous stature in her eyes. Here was a man who had the craft to seek to disarm her. The courtiers, straws in the wind, were quick to see that she was to be made much of, under their new master. Her youth was no drawback in their estimation, certainly ; her changeable eyes, her lovely mouth, her air of maiden modesty shot through with the summer-lightning of her irrepressible wit ; all on top of those spicy tales no one had quite forgotten. The courtiers swarmed. Elizabeth, tasting for the first time the long forbidden sweets of popularity, managed somehow to keep her head, and enchanted them all impartially.

Negotiations were under way for a marriage between Edward and the eldest daughter of the King of France, since Mary Stuart had got beyond his reach. He liked her name—Elizabeth. But early in the spring a rumour seeped through London that the King would never live to marry anybody. And people began to wonder again about the succession.

Listening tensely for her own name in all this talk of marriages, Elizabeth soon heard reference to the Prince of Denmark. She knew nothing about him, cared nothing, in the first flutter of fear. But she wrote a note to Edward, asking for a private interview ; intending to lay before him an artless, tearful tale of affection for the land of her birth, and an earnest aversion to marriage. Then she tore that up and wrote another, very similar, to Warwick, with the same performance in mind. She destroyed that too. Something

said Wait. Let it come to a head. Make them speak of it first to her. Let them alone till they made a definite, official move in her direction. Her consent must be asked, as a mere matter of form. Time enough then for objections, entreaties, threats. Don't waste thunder. Wait.

She was woefully disappointed in Edward, who was now a pale, imperious boy of thirteen, full of the self-conscious sanctimoniousness more or less thrust upon him by his elders, along with the assertive garrulity of the royal child who is accustomed to have its least utterance heard literally on bended knee. Elizabeth, always performing scrupulously the requisite genuflexions and compliments, saw it all in the light of the simple good sense bequeathed to her by the lost Catherine Parr ; saw, too, that these empty formalities were the further ruination of Edward. He was encouraged to exact far more show of homage than his father had ever done—and it made him merely ridiculous. One had knelt instinctively to the massive Henry in his chair of state—he was a king. This puppet prodigy, prompted and marvelled at and enthroned, was not.

Edward was never of a temperament to think for himself in the best of circumstances. At this whispering court, squabbled over, flattered, and bullied, his every impulse stifled and his every opinion influenced, he had no hope of manhood. Lost in admiration of his own profundity, he would drone out his endless platitudes, and Elizabeth found herself listening like the rest, saying "Yes, brother," and "No, brother," at the proper points in his discourse—while she wondered with an uneasiness like pain what the destiny of England would be, with such a pitiful automaton on the throne. But after him came Mary, and a sure return to Catholicism, which meant wrangling and riot. And then, presumably, it would be left for her to pick up the pieces.

The atmosphere of the Court was heavy with intrigue. She felt it everywhere she turned—everybody with an axe to grind, and nobody trusting anybody else out of sight. She realized unwillingly that she could count on Edward for nothing, ever—and yet she went on tirelessly trying to make him like her even better ; humouring him, amusing him, admiring his parrot knowledge, making him laugh by foolish little jokes which often had to be explained to him first. Occasionally it seemed to her that she struck a spark of his latent childhood still ; as when he forgot himself and cackled loudly at some small witticism which had caught his sluggish fancy ; or when he cast himself roughly upon her slender strength with the awkward, excessive affection of one unfamiliar with caresses ; or in the over-emphasized "*sweet, sweet sister*" which became his usual greeting. She was greedy of these clumsy evidences of his reviving love for her. She was greedy of anything like love, these days, and basked in approval like a cat in the sun—demurely, with lazy eyelids. But she knew that once she was gone from his side again, this elaborate devotion would fade once more into the heartless apathy with which he had endured Somerset's machinations two years before. Just let them lie to him again about her—and he

would desert her fast enough. He had neither the will nor the vitality to oppose the men who ordered his days and his ideas.

Therefore, she must enchant them all—all but the Earl of Warwick. She made no headway with him. He was friendly, he was smiling, and very polite, while she knew his chief desire in life was to be rid of her, and of Mary too. With Edward on the throne and Somerset on probation in daily fear of the scaffold, Warwick ruled. He was unpopular with the much-enduring people, but he might go on like this for years. Only like this? What had Warwick got up his sleeve?

One day while walking in the wintry garden of Whitehall, she saw Edward bent above a table at a window on the first floor. He was never alone, but she could not see who was with him now. He seemed to be writing. The day was mild, and she thought he should have more exercise for his health's sake, and said as much to the man who paced beside her—the quiet, wise, youngish man who had recently become Secretary of State. Cecil was his name.

"They will kill him like this!" she added impatiently. "Anyone can see he is not well!"

"And is that any concern of yours?"

She turned to look at him, to make sure she had heard those words aright, bald of her title as they were, and uttered in a low tone empty of etiquette. He had spoken to her as an equal, and their eyes met. The candour of his gaze denied the half-dozen words he had dropped so casually into the quiet air. It was as though her own most secret thoughts had spoken, and yet he looked as though he had not heard.

Most women would have asked him what he meant, or pretended to be deaf, or absent-minded. Elizabeth knew what he meant, and looking into his face thought it not worth while to pretend anything. Edward was doing England no good, and never would. But for all that—after Edward must come Mary.

"I dread a return to the old religion," she said, her delicate lips forming the words in a way she had, so that nothing carried beyond him to the few fur-wrapped figures scattered through the garden. "It would mean—oh, all sorts of county troubles, surely. The North against us here in London—" She finished with a little gesture of her gloved hands, uniting him and herself and Edward at the window. She knew his sentiments were Protestant, though not fanatically so.

"True," he agreed promptly. "But that danger is not immediate."

She understood that, too. Edward, frail as he was, might still outlive Mary, whose days were being shortened by this new misery of religious persecution. If Edward lived but long enough, England might safely hurdle the Catholic interval and come intact to her.

"I pray that may be so," she whispered.

Strange, elliptic conversation, packed with things unsaid, cementing an intuitive alliance between them. Pondering it as they paced the little formal paths between low-cut box hedges,

Elizabeth had an impulse. In all her statecraft to come, she could know an impulse for what it was worth, and sometimes act on it, and usually it was right.

She stood still in the path, facing him, their eyes on a level for he was not tall, looking at him without coquetry, honest and young and alone.

"I should like to know you for my friend, Will Cecil," she said simply.

He made her the smallest of grave bows, imperceptible, perhaps, from Edward's window or at the other end of the garden. To him, at thirty-one, twice married and a sober husband these five years to his Mildred, Elizabeth seemed almost a child, the daughter of his dead King. In her lay England's future, if England had one. And for all her thinness, and her little throat, and her sickroom pallor, she had her father's fire and the clean English blood of her mother. Her hold on life, God willing, was secure. She could afford to wait. But she must not make mistakes. That was where he came in. If they were careful they could both afford to wait.

"We have only to bide our time, madam," he said, and the pact was sealed.

They moved together again along the path. *Bide our time.* It was a conclusion she had reached by herself. His choice of pronouns gave her an odd exhilaration. There were two of them now. She could not quite understand her implicit trust in this man who had been Somerset's secretary before the Protector's fall, and was now Warwick's. He had even gone to the Tower with Somerset, for a few weeks, only to emerge unscathed into the favour of the rival. It did not speak well for his loyalty or his singleness of mind. And yet—she felt that his greatest concern was the same as hers : England. His master did not matter, for England was his mistress. And she—she was England.

A warm wave of confidence swept through her. Let the others prattle and smirk how they might, this man was her friend. She no longer stood entirely alone. His power was small as yet—and he would always be too cautious to put it to the test. He could do nothing for her, really—he was not an aggressive person—he would never fight for her, die for her. Oh, no. One must be reasonable. He was no happy warrior in her defence. But he was there, on her side, and in a half-dozen words he could make her feel that she was right. That was something.

Thus, without pageantry or gesture or speech-making, was the great alliance made. It was to endure through storm and stress, through her bad tempers and his obstinacy, for nearly fifty years ; for as long as he lived, that is.

"This matter of my marriage—" she murmured, pacing beside him.

"That must not be." There was no compromise in his tone and very little deference. "I may appear to urge it—but you must hold out against us."

Well, there it was already. She had not expected more, but it was hard to have it come so soon. Her faith in him was unshaken,

and remained so. But he would not range himself openly on her side against the rest. That was not his way. Doubtless he would keep her well abreast of their movements with regard to her affairs ; but he left her to fight her own battle against them, without a champion. She had had a champion once. . . .

Common sense told her Cecil's way was safer, more useful to both of them, than his open partisanship could ever be ; but her youth, her femininity, sighed. Time after time during the next fifty years she was to rebel against the coolness of this impersonal devotion of his, which seemed to reduce her to an abstract, a figurehead, a Cause. Whereas she was a woman. But that was Cecil, and probably it saved them both.

As they passed again under Edward's window, there was a tapping on the pane. Elizabeth looked up, laughing, and waved her hand, and when the boy laughed too, uncertainly, and sent an awkward gesture back, she blew a kiss. Edward began to pluck futilely at the latch of the window. Such small spontaneities on her side often excited him to great deeds—he would have the window open now and speak to her. Someone was sure to come and close it, and worry about draughts ; but he would have done a great and kingly thing, to speak to his sister, and Mr. Cecil below him in the garden.

“ If your Majesty will allow me—”

Edward turned guiltily, but relief showed at once in his unexpressive countenance. It was only Robert—the others had left him—even Dr. Cheke had been called away—he had forgotten for the moment that he was alone with Robert.

“ I want to speak to them,” he observed argumentatively.

“ Certainly, your Majesty.”

The latch yielded to Robert's deft fingers—the casement swung open, and Edward leaned out rapturously, secure in the knowledge of a guarding hand behind.

“ Sweet, sweet sister—” he burbled.

Her voice cut in.

“ Take care—don't let him fall ! ”

“ I have his belt, your Grace,” smiled Robert, over the King's shoulder.

“ Sweet, sweet Elizabeth—” bleated Edward, who could think of nothing else now that he wanted to say. “ Good Mr. Cecil—greeting,” he added conscientiously, as the Secretary bowed.

The young man in the window saw her turn her head, and could guess the question, and the answer.

“ Who is that with him ? ” asked Elizabeth.

“ One of Warwick's boys.”

“ Which one ? Not Ambrose—I know him.”

“ Robert—a younger son—and the best, I think.”

“ Let us hope so. My brother dotes on him, I hear.”

“ Come up,” called Edward, having got an idea at last. “ Come up, Elizabeth, and visit me ! Come and help me—” The words went away on the wind.

"I must go up at once," she said to Cecil. Her eyes were soft and merry, as they always were for Edward when he behaved like a human being. "He wants to show me something."

"Robert will come to the staircase to fetch you—" floated down, as the King was drawn within and the window fastened, on Robert's belated recollection of draughts.

Without another glance of understanding, or a syllable of secrecy, Elizabeth was gone, too swiftly for Cecil to see her properly into Robert's keeping. He followed after as a matter of form, smiling to himself. He liked her the better for her occasional disregard, or out and out forgetfulness, of court ways.

As he closed the garden door behind him, he heard her feet skipping up the nearest stairs, and knew that she would keep the pace through all those corridors between herself and the King's staircase, and would arrive panting and flushed beneath Robert's appreciative eyes. He wondered parenthetically why the fellow did not bring his wife to Court ; it was nearly a year now, since he had married Amy Robsart. She was a pretty creature, and wealthy —nothing to be ashamed of—the daughter of a country squire, of course, and probably quite uneducated. Cecil contemplated the learning of his Mildred with complacency. She was famous for it.

Robert, whose temporary sole responsibility for the King's person would not permit him to go beyond the head of the stairs, bowed low as Elizabeth came into view at the bottom. Her cheeks were faintly pink with the spring wind, and her hair had blown out in curling tendrils round her cap. She brought with her a whiff of fresh air from the garden.

"You are Robert Dudley," she said as she reached his level. Her eyes were keen and cool. "I have heard fine things of you."

"Your Grace—I pray I may have opportunity to justify them all in your Grace's eyes."

He bowed again, and led the way past ushers and guardsmen, and through an ante-room to the long, stately chamber above the privy garden.

She entered Edward's apartments eagerly, ready to make the most of this informal interview. Perhaps a word might be dropped now about the Prince of Denmark—but very carefully, in case Warwick's son was here to bear tales. Doubtless all she said to Edward would reach the Earl before night. It must be a most delicate hint then, if she got the chance.

Before she could complete the deep obeisance court ritual required at every sight of the King, Edward seized her and dragged her to the table. A rare enthusiasm possessed him. There was a childish litter of paints, pens, brushes, a bit of stained rag, endless sheets of discarded paper, and a silver mug. He held before her a chosen page which bore an unfinished design in red and gilt paint.

"Look, Bess—see what I am doing!"

"How beautiful!" she said promptly, wondering what on earth it was meant to be, and conscious of the handsome Dudley boy's respectful amusement behind her.

"It's for my Journal," he explained. "I have worked at it all morning. It will be the first page of my Journal—an illuminated title-page," he added proudly, lest she fail to grasp the full magnificence of it.

"Of course—I see!" She was able now to recognize the royal arms of England. "But how clever of you, brother! 'Tis the leopards and the lilies and the crown—to the life! How very clever of you, indeed!"

"The leopards are very hard to do," he sighed, jabbing a stubby forefinger at the quarterings of the shield as he drooped against her, his brief animation fading swiftly. "Dr. Cheke said I ought not to ask Robert to help—he said my leopards were as good as Robert's would be—but after he went away we rubbed them out and Robert made new ones—quite good ones, *I think*—I did the lilies, though _____."

"Why, brother, the lilies are superb!" she cried hastily. (No two of them were the same size.)

"Dr. Cheke did not say *I must not ask you to help*," he remarked craftily.

"But of course I will help, if I can! And what would you like me to do?"

"*Edwardus Rex*." He pointed either side of the crown above the shield, where the two initials were already traced in wobbly penmarks. "Sit here and put the gold paint on—Robert, fetch a chair—and you must not tell Dr. Cheke my sister helped me—do the E—R, Bess—why, it's your initials, too!" He was much struck by this singular coincidence. "*Elizabeth or Edward—Rex or Regina*—it would look the same! But Mary would be M—R." He ran on happily, while Robert placed a chair and Elizabeth sat down and took a brush between her fingers. He leaned heavily on her shoulder, kicking at the table-leg, and sniffing, and breathing through his mouth. Edward always had a cold. "I drew round the mug for the Garter," he boasted, indicating the gilt-edged loop which backed the shield and crown. "To make the circle, you see. It will look very fine when it is finished, with the *Honi soit* written on it. Some day my Journal will be a whole book, in my handwriting, with hundreds and hundreds of leaves. Dr. Cheke thought it would be a good idea for me to keep a record of the happenings of my reign." He ruffled a thin pile of leaves on the end of the table, and added disconsolately, "Some days nothing happens at all. There is a lot about the Scotch wars, though—a battle is something to write about, or a treaty. I take notes while they explain it to me, and write it all out afterwards. Then when Mary came to Court the last time and was so wicked and wilful, I put that in. It is very sad about Mary. What would *you* do, sister?"

"What would I do?" murmured Elizabeth above her careful brush. Edward's lines were unsteady and faint, but one must not hurt his feelings by trimming them up too obviously. E—R. *Rex*—or *Regina*. There was something fantastic about it. And now he asked her advice. *What would you do?* This was more as she had

dreamed it long ago, before her father's death had made way for Somerset, and Somerset's fall had given Warwick the power. The warm weight of her brother's body against her shoulder recalled his confiding childhood. There was still a child in Edward, somewhere, if only one were allowed. . . . "Why, I should let her be, I think."

"That is what they all say I must do," he complained. A pious echo of the Council Chamber promptings came to his parrot mind. "And yet I can scarcely sleep at night for grieving over the soul of our dear sister which we are powerless to save—at the moment," he added darkly. "Later, perhaps something can be done.—I am sick of red," he continued, kicking at the table-leg. "It went all wrong for the crown. See if you can make the red come right, Bess—behind the leopards, you know. I can gild them later—I like to do the gilt—"

"Red paint is always difficult," she agreed. "Let me see what I can do—but I shall spoil it if you joggle the table like that!" She began to work gingerly round the whip-like tails of the royal beasts, while Edward breathed down her neck and chuckled against her shoulder.

"Dr. Cheke will think I did it all myself," he gloated. "It is a better red you've made! I had forgotten—you used to copy out prayers and sermons for me in coloured inks. Perhaps if I wrote out some English prayers for Mary—with gilt initials—but she prays in Latin still and that is wrong—so the gilt would all be wasted, wouldn't it—or would it?—if I made them very beautiful, might she not learn to pray in English too?"

"I am sure she would use your prayers, brother, if only for the love she bears you. I should, if I were Mary!" And she squeezed his pudgy hand that rested beside the paper.

"Ah, but you are of the true religion," he sighed.

"We might make a prayer for Mary and send it to her on her birthday," she suggested, anxious to retain this new intimacy with him.

"Yes," he assented listlessly, losing interest. "How old is Mary, Bess?"

"Let me see, Mary is—thirty-five," said Elizabeth, realizing it with a shock of surprise.

"And you—how old are you?" he queried idly.

"I shall be eighteen in September."

"So old?" said Edward. "We must be quick to find a husband for you, Bess."

Well, there it was. Elizabeth's heart beat faster, while the face she raised to him was full of a hurt reproach. Robert, except as audience, was negligible now.

"Ah, brother!" she cried, as though wounded to the quick. "Would you send me away from you so lightly? You would not even care if you never saw me again? God knows I try to please you—" She leaned her head against his breast with a sob. "Be a little kind to poor Bess, who loves you so!"

Her tears were real, and Edward was distressed. He found his handkerchief, which he would not have dreamed of using to blow his nose, and wiped her cheeks with it ineffectually, moved by a vague memory of that other day at Hertford long ago when she had clung to him and cried.

Robert in the background viewed the affecting scene sympathetically. It struck him for the first time what it must mean to girls like this one, still in their teens, to be packed off into a foreign marriage, away from their own people, their home, their mother tongue even. And he knew that an English ambassador was then negotiating such a marriage for Elizabeth at the Danish court.

Elizabeth was not play-acting. The thing had preyed on her mind for weeks, and she was all nerves about it. And lately she had begun to enjoy herself where she was. To-day had been more as she had planned her life, and Edward's, years ago ; he was to count on her, and to discuss with her his problems—such as Mary. The idea of exile became even more unbearable than before, and she wept, her face against the sable fur that banded Edward's house robe, his hand patting helplessly at her shoulder.

"His lordship the Earl of Warwick," said an usher at the door, and Robert's father came into the room.

He was urbane and smiling, to them all. He admired Edward's title-page, and affected not to notice that Elizabeth had most obviously been crying. But they all knew that he was not pleased with this informal scene.

Dr. Cheke's absence was carefully explained, and Elizabeth's presence also. Through a misunderstanding, Warwick got off with the idea that Cecil had accompanied Elizabeth to the room, and as the Secretary lent sobriety to any occasion, nobody contradicted the Earl's impression, in the strange, companionable guilt shared by the three of them. Nothing more was said about marriages or birthdays, and Elizabeth contrived to depart very soon.

Robert held the door for her, and she noticed that his brown eyes were bright and friendly, and she gave him a smile as she passed. An honest-seeming, cheery lad, who was very good for Edward, and handsome, like all the Dudley brood. She liked her own mental picture of him, bent above the table, his lean brown hand tracing leopards for Edward. There was something very likeable about him—something quick and warm and ready to be friends, and yet at the same time something less bold and loud than most of the court gallants. Without doubt he was a horseman and a hunter. She liked a man who was good at horses. . . . And so she arrived somewhat thoughtfully at her own rooms.

As for Robert, he stood with the door in his hand and looked after her, even when she had turned the corner out of sight. Strange eyes she had—and so unspoilt by court influences—somehow so colt-like and untamed. . . . His father's voice jerked him back into the room.

III

The plague came again that summer, and the Court scattered to the comparative safety of its country houses. There was an earthquake too, which put the fear of God into all Surrey, and in Kent enormous hailstones fell during a terrific tempest in June. Signs and wonders seemed on the increase, portending some dire change in the lives of the great.

Elizabeth had gone back to Hatfield, with a sense of relief. As she rode into the park under its great oaks, she rested a fond, possessive gaze on the mellow red brick and gracious casements. Her own house. Belatedly, after years of humiliation and insecurity—but hers now. She meant to keep it, too, along with those later acquisitions resulting from her new hold on the King's affections. Mary had had large land grants from him as long ago as 1547. Now it was her turn.

Somehow nothing more was heard of the Prince of Denmark. She pondered this, and felt a mounting confidence and zest for future problems. See, she had not been driven into a corner after all! She had the sense to recognize that no thanks were due to Cecil, for he had warned her that he would not interfere; nor to Edward, for all her opportune appeal. Neither of them would stand up against the Council for her; not for long. No, the matter had simply faded away as such projects will, in haggling over dowry rights or some treaty difficulty. And she had still the trump card of a point-blank refusal. Doubtless she would need it soon enough. But the matter of the Prince of Denmark taught her how half of statecraft is in learning how to wait. Don't rush at things. Sit still, and make disaster come all the way. Do nothing always, as long as possible. Wait.

Warwick fell ill in August and cried out that he had caught the plague, but he recovered. Meanwhile it appeared that Somerset was getting out of hand again. The Council Chamber would not hold the two of them. So in October Somerset found himself again in the Tower; though while he had his faults most people preferred him to the Earl of Warwick.

The charge was vaguely that he was assembling his seditious party again, and plotting against the life of the Earl, who now made himself Duke of Northumberland. At the same time Henry Grey, that quiet, harmless-seeming man who was Marquis of Dorset, became the Duke of Suffolk, assuming in his wife's right the title which had just died with her two half-brothers, both child-victims of the plague.

The brief sun of the Seymours had set. Somerset lost all his arrogance and even his dignity in his fear of death, and begged for mercy on his knees. There was no mercy, as there had been none for Thomas, and he was condemned to the block and the axe. In his extremity he even turned to Elizabeth for help—to that pale, cool-headed creature whose life he had done his best to jeopardize only

three years before. Surely he had not forgotten . . . but he counted blindly, desperately, on her recent favour at Court and her unrevengeful youth.

She had not forgotten anything, and she had no wish to test in so unimportant a cause the extent of her new influence with the King. In her eyes it was merely justice on a rather grand scale. Somerset was reaping as he had sowed. Safe at Hatfield, unworldly and aloof and very wise, she replied that she was but a weak woman without power against the undertakings of Parliament, as he well knew ; she feared that it would go hard with him as he had so few friends, and advised him piously to turn to God for comfort and defence ; and signed herself pointedly " always the same." Beneath its silky surface every sentence of that letter was barbed.

Mary was at her London house in Clerkenwell that autumn, but she made no effort on his behalf, in spite of her friendship with his Duchess who was also in the Tower. It was a time when if one was in a comfortable obscurity one did well to stay there.

Somerset's trial and death sentence followed close on the festivities connected with the visit of Marie, Dowager Queen of Scotland and mother of Mary Stuart. Mary, now ten years old, was being brought up in the severely Catholic court of Henry II and Catherine de Medici, and would become the wife of the Dauphin as soon as she was old enough ; meanwhile her mother returned from France to Edinburgh to rule Scotland for her.

Marie brought with her French fashions and frivolities, and Edward's dull court was considerably enlivened. The echoes of the hospitalities extended to her reached the Duke of Somerset, ticking off his days in the Tower. Even after Marie had gone, things would not settle down. With all his smug piety and precocious views on life, Edward was still a child, with a Tudor's childish love of display and gaieties. Warwick, now Northumberland, loosened the reins a little, thus profiting by one of Somerset's mistakes. Edward revelled in the most lavish Christmas of his reign, while the Duke looked on indulgently.

So for the first time in his life, Edward thoroughly forgot himself in a riotous good time. He was encouraged to forget Somerset, too. The Protector had been a difficult man to love like an uncle, and they told the boy he had plotted against Northumberland's life, which Edward agreed was very wicked, and quoted Scripture to prove it. He was always too tired or too diverted to give the matter very much thought. And anyway, there was nothing he could do—they listened to him respectfully, they smiled, and stroked their beards, and met one another's eyes above his head—then they said he did not quite understand, and talked endlessly at him, saying very little that made sense, and keeping him from things he preferred to do—it was always the same if he tried to interfere with them, or to comprehend their intentions—they heard him out, and bowed, and did as they pleased. So much for being a king, sighed Edward.

On an evening late in January, too sleepy to set down any of the

pious reflections which trooped dimly through the back of his mind, Edward made a succinct entry in his Journal :

22. The Duke of Somerset had his head cut off on Tower Hill between eight and nine o'clock in the morning.

IV

Jane, eldest daughter of the new Duke of Suffolk, was only a few weeks older than Edward. Her claim to the English throne was as good as Mary Stuart's, except that her maternal grandmother was Henry's *younger* sister—that lovely golden Mary Tudor, girl-widow of Louis XII, who married Charles Brandon in 1515. Their son died, but two daughters survived. And when Henry Grey pleased the old King by his zeal for mulcting the monasteries, he was rewarded with the hand of the King's elder niece Frances. And again the son died, and the girls lived.

As long ago as the days when Thomas Seymour plotted to marry Elizabeth, Jane Grey had been regarded as a possible match for her cousin Edward. Edward was rather tactless about it ; he was used to Jane, whom he saw occasionally on family visits and progresses, and she had the colossal cheek to know her Greek and Latin as well as he did and a bit more ; Edward asserted royally that when he came to marry he would have a foreign princess with jewels and a dowry, not simple Jane, poring over her books as an escape from the ceremony and glitter of court life, which frightened and fatigued her. It was Edward's first and last small groping toward Romance. He demanded glamour in his hypothetical queen.

Jane's mother inherited Charles Brandon's cheery callousness and broad physique, and Jane, who was diminutive and meek and studious, and something of a prig—which she could only have got from her father's side—had all her short life infuriated the blowsy Lady Frances, who did not know what books were for. Frances hunted and played games like a man—like her father. She should have had a lusty, red-headed son to give her back as good as he got ; she could have understood and respected that. But at a very early age small Jane disapproved of her mother and avoided her, and this reacted on Lady Frances till her treatment of Jane amounted to persecution, and Jane nursed a growing terror of her mother's loud ways and heavy hand. Henry Grey was not the man to interfere between his wife and her offspring, but he recognized at least that the child was valuable property and Jane loved him for an amiable neglect.

Thomas Seymour had sown large ideas in the minds of the Greys regarding the future of their eldest, and in his care Jane had known a brief respite from her mother's tyranny. His death seemed to blight her prospects, and at the same time it robbed her of a bluff protector she had begun timidly to admire. She was never quite clear about what happened to Thomas. She was eleven then, and

she had not developed Elizabeth's terrible precocity. During the long grim weeks of his trial and for several days after his execution, she crept forlornly about the big, cold palace in the Strand which had suddenly become so empty of his pervading good spirits, while his mother did nothing but cry and cry, and the servants whispered in corners. And finally, when Thomas was dead and had no further use for her, her father came to fetch her home to Bradgate.

She loved Bradgate, with its chestnut trees and rose garden, and the terrace, and the trout stream washing the very walls of the house, and the great fern in the park—it was still home, bleak as it looked to her that March day when she returned to it. Its atmosphere was somewhat subdued. The Greys had had a bad scare. They were glad enough to settle down with gloomy prudence in Leicestershire for a while, though Thomas's ambitious plans survived in their secret souls, and they made Jane's life a nightmare of rigorous upbringing which they considered necessary to fit her for the exalted destiny they still hoped to thrust upon her.

Her one consolation was her tutor John Aylmer, a mild wise man who worshipped her. They could find no real fault with her simply inordinate desire to learn—and so lessons became her only refuge from them. At thirteen she was reading Hebrew and Plato, and corresponding with learned Protestant divines in Latin.

During Somerset's ensuing prosperity there was talk of a marriage between his son, Lord Hertford, and Jane. Her parents acquiesced hastily, knowing that the ill will between the brothers Seymour had been increased by dissension regarding Jane's disposal, and anxious that the Protector should think they had quite forgotten that the Admiral had been aware of Jane at all. Hertford was a handsome, likely lad, exactly Jane's age, and it went as far as a betrothal contract between the two. To Jane it meant a hope of escape from her miserable existence at home, and she had known Hertford all her life and liked him. He would have humoured her, perhaps, and been kind to her; perhaps he would have taught her how to be happy. But his father died on the scaffold, and Northumberland came into power.

By that time the possibility of Edward's living to marry and beget children had faded to an improbability. It looked like Queen Mary and Catholicism in England very soon, and Northumberland's guilty conscience told him in the dark nights that he would not long survive her accession. If Mary could be passed over or somehow got round they came to Elizabeth, with whom his life would be safe enough, perhaps—he had let her alone—but it was plain that young as she was she would never be ruled by her brother's Council. Northumberland knew that, one way or another, his power would end with Elizabeth's coronation. Even now, she had a will and a mind of her own. There would soon be collisions. But if Elizabeth could be missed out, too, then came Jane, who only wanted to be left to her books.

He considered that Mary might be excluded on religious grounds, or on the old matter of her legitimacy. But Elizabeth—that would

be more difficult. She might yet be married off abroad and got out of the country that way, though Edward had an inconvenient idea that she did not want to marry. It was distressing to think that she could be so clever at her age. Heaven only knew where it would end. Perhaps if the marriage hook were nicely baited, with a young and handsome prince—Northumberland told them off on his fingers—the Duke of Saxony had sons—there was still the Prince of Denmark—and what about the Italians—possibly she might fancy an Italian. . . . And with Elizabeth accounted for, Jane could be married to Northumberland's only bachelor son, his particular darling, his Guildford. And Northumberland would still rule.

Thus, in the night watches, of his fear of Mary and his love of power, the great scheme was born. Edward's sisters must be got rid of, and Jane Grey, on whom the old King himself had meant the crown to devolve as a last resort, must be made Queen of England.

Northumberland had always been on good terms with Henry Grey, with whom it would have been difficult to quarrel, for he was a malleable man with few convictions. Grey thought Northumberland's a much better idea than Seymour's ; this project was sheer genius, especially as it did not hang on Edward's precarious health, but presupposed the imminent death which everyone was prophesying. Jane's queenship had fallen through once, but Northumberland talked well, and made it sound very simple.

Early in 1553 they broke the news to Jane that she was to marry Guildford Dudley at once. Jane was horrified. In the first place she regarded herself as affianced to Lord Hertford, whom she could have loved. Secondly, she did not like Guildford, a pretty boy, but spoilt and domineering. Jane said she wouldn't.

There was a family scene at Bradgate. Lady Frances raised her voice and got purple in the face. The Duke of Suffolk was seized by the rare anger of a weak but obstinate man thwarted. Frantic and sobbing, Jane held to her futile refusal. Then Suffolk struck her wildly, beside himself at these unexpected signs of character in the docile child they had bullied so long. Jane reeled with the blow and stumbled back against her mother, whose fingers left her small arm numb and black with bruises.

Jane was not yet sixteen. She had adored her father for a kindly indifference, and now he turned against her too. After that nothing seemed to matter very much. She had never a high spirit and no vitality. Her hysterical objections to Guildford as a husband were drowned in her own tears.

The wedding was celebrated at the end of May, with an almost regal pomp, at the Northumberland mansion in the Strand. Edward sent princely gifts, many of them the confiscated property of the late Duke of Somerset ; but he was too ill to attend the ceremony, and the populace murmured against the heartless extravagance of the bridal festivities while the King lay dying. The bride, small and pinched-looking, with childish freckles across her minute nose, was almost lost in the magnificence. They had

promised her that she might return to her own family until she was of a more suitable age for marriage ; but at the last minute Northumberland changed his mind and she was sent to her husband's house before her sixteenth birthday.

Northumberland was suddenly in a hurry to see the marriage irrevocably consummated. The year before, Edward had contrived to catch both the measles and the small-pox simultaneously, when either one might have finished him. He rode his summer progresses as far as Portsmouth, and kept up his Journal a few months longer, but in the royal processions he seemed bent almost double by the weight of his gold chain of office. His listless interest in games and shooting that autumn died in a racking cough which hung on all winter, and by the time Jane's wedding day came he was spending all his time on a couch, exhausted, white-faced, and pitiful. Northumberland watched him fading before their eyes, and sleeplessly paced his own chamber at night, laying his feverish plans.

Mary was sulking in the country. Let her stay there, out of the way. But all the marriage schemes for Elizabeth had come to nothing so far, entangled in the mazes of negotiation and blocked by her own studied lack of interest. Northumberland had a terrible suspicion that she saw through him—at her age!—and played for time against him, knowing that time was his greatest enemy. Incredible disaster, if the tortuous brain of Henry VIII lived on in this girl's thin body! Where, the Duke would demand desperately of his own four walls, would that end? One couldn't face it. Mary was at least single-minded and consistent. You knew where you were, with Mary. But this other one—quicksilver! And you felt, behind her considered speech and her perfect manners, you somehow felt—ridicule?—or at the least, a sort of undazzled vigilance very hard to bear—as though she saw through everything—as though she could never be taken by surprise—as though. . . . Such ideas left no room for sleep.

As long as Henry's two girls were alive and unmarried, Henry's will must be broken in order to place Jane on the throne before them. The only person who could upset Henry's will was Edward, by making a counteracting will of his own. If Edward died now, leaving things as they were, all the Duke's designs, all his intricate preparations, all his villainies, were a total loss, and Somerset even had died for nothing.

Northumberland's gait, as he shuttled endlessly up and down his chamber, was the gait of an old, sick man. There was no time—no time to lose. First of all, Edward must be made to see that both Elizabeth and Mary were likely to marry foreign princes; and that in Mary's case at least such a marriage might set a Catholic line on the throne of England. At the same time he must understand how, with Jane already married safely to an English Protestant, the succession would be secure from Rome. Jane, as Queen, would have English Protestant children, like Edward himself, for instance. That would be a strong point, surely. And it must all be done so quickly. At once.

To argue Edward into devising a document passing over his sisters in favour of Jane was only the beginning, and Northumberland went to work. Edward's zeal for the Reformed religion ruled Mary out easily enough ; it would be less easy to disinherit Elizabeth. Northumberland harped on the probability of a foreign marriage—which she so perversely refused to consider and which he was trying so hard to bring off—for no matter what she said now, the Duke pointed out to Edward, she would of course have to marry some day. . . . His voice droned on endlessly, saying the same things over and over again, in the long hot summer afternoons.

Edward was ill and wretched and wanted only to lie still and think his strange dull thoughts. He wished Northumberland would let him alone, and the Duke nagged and worried at him till he would have signed anything for peace. He had nothing against Jane now that she had married somebody else. It mattered less and less to Edward who wore the crown of England when he had laid it down forever. After seven years he considered it very little use to anyone ; the Council ruled. And these others were all just girls—just queens. He was the last king—Edward VI, he was. It would have been nice to have a son to be Edward VII, but they said he was too young to marry. Some people married at his age. Jane was no older, really. But it took so long to find a wife for a king. Ambassadors made so many difficulties. If Jane had the son, that would do. And he needn't bother. If only he needn't bother about anything. If he signed the paper perhaps Northumberland would stop talking. . . .

The Lord Chief Justice was therefore, to his horror, required to draw up a deed of settlement altering the succession, and prepare it for the signatures of the Council and the Judges. There was a row in the Council Chamber, of course. Secretary Cecil held out the longest, and the Earl of Arundel made the most noise. Northumberland lost his temper and offered to fight in his shirt any man who opposed the measure. Edward wept and stormed, firmly convinced now that the whole thing was his own desire.

By the end of June most of them had set their names to a document which they felt to be treasonous and illegal, rendering null and void Henry's will and the Act of Parliament which ratified it. They submitted largely to protect themselves from Northumberland's immediate hostility, hoping for a chance to withdraw later from what they chose to regard as a mere measure of expediency. And Northumberland was now authorized to make Jane Queen of England if he could.

Edward had been at Greenwich since April, and the Court was in attendance there. Once since his arrival he had gone for a walk in the garden ; and once, because a rumour of his death persisted, they had dressed him royally, even to the red velvet cap with a white feather, and he had shown himself at a window, waving his hand and smiling whitely at the little mob of anxious faces clustered below. But now it seemed that he had taken to his bed for the last time. A story flew about London that a slow poison was at work,

and that Northumberland was the murderer ; while on the contrary, the Duke was praying for more time while he sent out false, cheery bulletins of a fictitious improvement in the King's health. He was not ready yet.

His forces were assembling—he had men, ships, supplies, and now he approached the gravest step of all. Mary and Elizabeth must be dealt with. So long as they were left at large to form two separate rallying points for his enemies he could not hope for any consolidated action in favour of Lady Jane. And in those endless nocturnal vigils in his chamber he had made up his mind to lodge the King's sisters in the Tower where he could keep an eye on them.

The thing had come upon him. He dreaded to act, he could not eat, he moved about the Palace at Greenwich distraught and ageing visibly, hoping against hope that the sick boy might rally as he had done before. Mad, murderous remedies were tried, and Edward got worse instead of better. Ambassadors began to gather, the vultures of diplomacy. Renard arrived from the Emperor, ostensibly to guard Mary's interests, but with prudent secret instructions to bend with the wind in the event of trouble over a Catholic succession. The Emperor had too much on his hands at the moment to take on England too. Noailles came from France to watch Renard, for Henry II and Charles were at death grips.

July came hot and sultry, with electric storms and terrible forked lightning which never cleared the air. Ill omens were observed in everything ; gigantic fish were caught in the Thames, always a bad sign ; a woman gave birth to a monster babe ; ghosts walked, and black cats ; people had horrible nightmares, and heard strange noises at night ; there was red hail in London. A superstitious tension drew tight over the city, and rumour ran wild in the streets.

At Greenwich the Council waited, its records a blank, while Edward fought for breath in the stifling heat, mouthing his pitiful broken prayers, which were all he ever had to comfort him. Jane was at Northumberland's house at Chelsea, ill, and enduring Guildford the best she could. No one had told her that she was to be Queen.

V

On the evening of the sixth of July, Robert Dudley left the royal bedchamber quietly, closing the door behind him on the little group of low-voiced men who stood withdrawn from the great bed, their faces strained and hopeless. The King's doctors had given up. There was nothing more they could do. The tragic object in the bed was scarcely human now, though whether it had suffered lately more from disease or from remedies it would be difficult to say.

As the terrible verdict was spoken the Duke of Northumberland had turned his head to catch his son's waiting eye, and nodded imperceptibly. Robert understood. It was even worse than they

had thought ; worse than they had been able to believe. He had been carefully coached before the conference, and he knew what he must do. His preferences had not been consulted. He was a cog in the relentless machine of his father's ambition, and he was expected to do his part without pausing to think for himself. No one wanted his opinions, and he had kept them to himself. But he did not like the errand which now took him down the King's staircase and through the long gallery on his way to the courtyard and stables.

In the great hall he met the Earl of Arundel.

"What news, Robert ? "

"They are with his Majesty now."

"Well ? "

"Not good news, I fear," said Robert evasively, and as he tried to pass, Arundel laid a detaining hand on his sleeve.

"How long ? "

"A matter of hours, perhaps. They will not say, exactly."

"And—what then ? " The older man was watching him keenly.

"Then ? Why, the Lady Jane will come to London at once for the proclamation."

"And what of the King's sisters ? "

Robert looked harassed. This was the part he relished least.

"Mary is still at Hunsdon, and the other at Hatfield, of course. They—they will be brought to London too——"

"To London, eh ! And are they then expected to submit cheerfully to the coronation of their cousin ? "

"They are but lone women," said Robert uneasily. "Resistance would be foolish and futile. They have no army—no money—no party. But I cannot say what my father intends."

"You know as well as I do that he intends to make them prisoners. You know that if they come to London, it will be to the Tower !" cried Arundel roughly. "And you know too, as well as I do, what that will mean for them in case of—trouble ! "

"He would hardly dare—" began Robert uncertainly, hearing his own most secret apprehensions dragged out into the light of day.

"He would not dare to let them live ! " said Arundel, and turned away to stare out of the window. "I tell you we are all in this now —up to the neck !" he went on bitterly, over his shoulder. "And none knows it better than the Duke of Northumberland. What is his head worth, or yours, or mine, if Mary comes to the throne, after this ? He has left her no peace for years. You are his son. And I am of his Council. He has burned all our bridges ! How can we hope for mercy if this attempt to put Lady Jane on the throne fails—and Mary makes herself Queen in spite of him ? Then it will be treason we are guilty of. There is only one answer to that ! " His hand jerked to his collar, and away.

But Robert's mind had stuck at the first sentence. *He would not dare to let them live !* Suddenly his mind's eye was seeing a girl in a wintry garden, who waved her hand and laughed, and blew a kiss to Edward at the window—a girl's face bent above her patient

brush, tracing Edward's wobbly lines—a girl's tears, because she did not want a foreign marriage. And then, unreasonably, he remembered her small white throat. He was on his way now to the stables, to send off the message which would bring her to London—perhaps to . . .

"I—I had not thought—" he murmured wretchedly, and Arundel rounded on him again.

"Body of God, boy, 'tis time we all thought ! Nay, it is too late to think ! If the Duke's plans miscarry now we all go down with him. And even if they succeed, he will know no security—" His voice dropped. "—not till he signs the death warrants of the King's sisters !"

"You think they are the rightful heirs, in spite of the new will ?"

Arundel remembered that he spoke to the Duke's son.

"Rightful heirs or no, they are Tudors. That means they will fight for the crown—and if they win it, they will have no mercy !"

"Then you think it will be our lives or theirs," said Robert while it dawned on him fully.

"I think the Duke will come to think that very soon."

"Well, God have mercy on us all," concluded Robert piously, and passed on down the hall.

He descended the outer staircase in deep thought, with reluctant feet. He had not seen it quite like this before, though he had never liked the prospect which loomed behind his father's enterprise. But she was young, and thrilling to look at, and vibrantly alive. And now she would be shut up in the Tower, perhaps to wear out a weary lifetime captive there, or perhaps—he remembered suddenly how her mother had died. And when she came to the Tower she would remember too, and be frightened. Unthinkable that through any act of his such a rare creature should go the way Anne Boleyn had gone.

The message must be sent. His father would find out very soon if it did not go. But perhaps, if she could be warned at the same time. . . . His heart beat faster with his own daring. It meant betraying his own father. One could not do such a thing. And even if he did, so that she was not caught, and if she somehow contrived to recapture her heritage by keeping out of Northumberland's reach now—they would all go down together, Arundel said. But would they all—if it was he who warned her ?

His life or hers. Well, perhaps. But would she ever really condemn to death for treason a man who had betrayed his father to save her ? She had smiled at him that day two years ago. He had seen his own youth and good looks mirrored in her appraising eyes. He could hope that she had not quite forgotten him. So that if some time he should claim the warning which had kept her clear of his father's net—well, he thought she would be kind. After all, his father had not hesitated to stake the lives of his sons along with his own. They had been given no choice but to fall in with schemes they knew to be treasonous. Therefore, if one of them laid a small

side-stake of his own, for a chance to survive in case his father failed. . . .

Robert let himself out into the hot twilight and strode toward the stables.

The Earl of Arundel stood at a window overlooking the courtyard and whistled softly through his teeth, his eyes on the black, muttering sky. Another thunderstorm was on its way, and the air was thick and stale and tinged with yellow. A figure crossed the yard below—he peered through the murky half-light of the coming storm—it was Robert Dudley on his way to the stables. The small, tuneless whistling hitched once, and went on.

Arundel was still standing thoughtfully at the window when two mounted messengers shot through the gates with a rattle of hooves and were gone, along the road to London. The man who rode for Hunsdon carried a letter which said that the King was ill and desired the comfort of his sister's presence at Greenwich. The Hatfield messenger possessed a duplicate, but he was the heavier for Robert Dudley's purse of gold and a small scrap of paper in his glove.

Robert had evidently returned to the house by another door. Still whistling softly, Arundel strolled out into the baked courtyard and turned toward the stables. There he found his favourite mare being fed by a worried-looking groom who had been long in his service.

"What's toward, your lordship?"

"Another storm, I think." Arundel stroked the mare's glossy shoulder and absently dodged the nuzzling response she made, lest she soil his satins with her dinner. "Take a horse," he said, very low, "not this one, which is known for mine, but a good one all the same. Saddle it for London and leave it in the thicket at the turn of the road."

"For your lordship?" The man was awed.

"For yourself."

"I ride to London?"

Arundel made up his mind. He laid his hand on the groom's arm and bent his head. The mare's placid munching covered his whisper.

"To Hunsdon."

"The King——!"

"Sh! Not yet. Hark, now, on your life. Get the horse away at once. Then come back here and wait. I shall send word by Tom when I can. And if you talk, you're done for, remember that!" He turned away, and then came back. "You will find that there has been one before you at Hunsdon—from the Duke. Let her know you are aware of that. And make sure the fellow does not see you."

He climbed the stairs to his own room and wrote two lines on a sheet of paper—burnt it, and wrote again—and burnt that. Then he rose to walk the floor, his head in his hands. His life hung at the point of his pen. But if through his warning the rightful heir to the throne eluded her captors and was able to depose the usurper,

might he not be rewarded at least with his life? He believed in Mary as a Tudor, and he hated Northumberland on old scores, and Suffolk too. Arundel, a cuckoo in Northumberland's Council, felt he had bided his time long enough. Mary must be saved. Mary must be free, to head the forces which would be sure to rally round the daughter of old King Henry, Catholic or no, against the tyrannous upstart power of the Duke of Northumberland.

Arundel saw that a warning from him would prove to Mary as nothing else ever could that he had been but an unwilling witness of Northumberland's design. Everything depended on keeping her out of Northumberland's clutches. If she came to the Tower now she would be powerless to assert her rights.

But on the other hand, if Arundel's messenger were caught, or if it became known to Northumberland that the Palace harboured a traitor—The Earl sat down, his head in his hands. He must think. He must not throw away his chances recklessly. He must not hurry. He must go cautiously. He would wait a little, and see. . . .

Towards dark the storm broke viciously, in a roar of rain and thunder, with livid flares of lightning through his uncurtained windows. Bobbing lanterns in the courtyard caught his eye. He drew the curtain, stood behind it, watching. They were closing the gates.

Voices, the tramp of feet came up to him, above the rattle of the rain. The guard—a double guard, he saw, and drew in his breath. No news was meant to leave the Palace that night—no gossiping villagers could come and go. These precautions could mean only one thing: Something had happened which the world was not to know—and there was only one secret great enough. . . .

For his life, he dared not attempt to write to Mary now. It was too late.

As the stable clock struck nine he opened his door and descended to the corridor which led to the King's apartments, and hung about outside the door of the bedchamber, since he was denied admittance. Cheke was waiting there too, looking old and sad. Like Elizabeth, he had always been able to draw out the best in Edward, and was fond of the boy who had been in his intimate charge for ten years. To Cheke it was the passing of an era, and while his future with Northumberland's faction seemed secure and he was to have lovable little Jane in place of Edward, he felt disconsolate.

They greeted each other gloomily. There seemed to be nothing to say.

At last Northumberland came out, followed by Cranmer and the doctors.

"We—I came for news before retiring," said Arundel quietly.

The Duke regarded him a moment with wide, dazed eyes.

"The King—?" queried Cheke, on the other side.

"The King is sleeping," said Northumberland and passed on, Cranmer at his heels. Then he changed his mind, hesitated, and

looked back. "Summon the others," he said abruptly, with an inclusive gesture. "Summon the Council."

They saw that his hands were shaking.

The storm was over by midnight, and the hot stars had come out. Greenwich Palace was very quiet; very peaceful, behind closed gates, with a double guard.

But at midnight the Council was still in session and the candle-light showed a ring of weary faces and feverish eyes. Cecil was there, and Cheke, in the dignity of his new Secretaryship; the Duke of Suffolk, bald and pale and nervous; Arundel, sitting silent and sullen, his mind on the hidden horse and the guarded gates which made it useless; Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, who had divorced Catherine of Aragon and crowned Anne Boleyn, only to turn against her when Henry's fancy changed—who had weathered the disaster of Anne of Cleves, and seen the fall of Catherine Howard—who had crowned Edward, and acquiesced in Somerset's supremacy, and was now the complaisant tool of Northumberland; that ingratiating adventurer, Pembroke, too; shifty Paget, and the accommodating Marquis of Winchester—they were all there, more than a dozen of them, with Northumberland at the head of the table; debating the fate of the King's sisters, and equally of Suffolk's daughter, Lady Jane.

The summer dawn was pearly on their faces when they rose at last, stiff, grunting, heavy-eyed, and slightly unbuttoned. They were more or less agreed. The King's death must be kept a secret several days if possible; things must go on as usual in the Palace; the world might suspect, but it must not be sure. The Tower was to be made ready for Lady Jane's reception as Queen, and at the same time for the royal captives—that grim building so often harboured sovereign and condemned simultaneously. And Robert Dudley would ride with a troop of horse before this new day was over, and escort the Princess Mary, forcibly if need be, to her prison. They counted on securing Elizabeth without difficulty when she arrived in obedience to the summons already sent to Hatfield.

For Arundel there was nothing to do but go to bed. Not so much as a mouse could have passed the gates of Greenwich unchallenged.

VI

At Hatfield that night of the sixth of July, Elizabeth sat looking at a paper in her hand, while the casements streamed with rain and forked lightning made livid the edges of the arras drawn across the windows. In London the flooded streets were running full spate, and a Protestant church had been struck and burnt.

Elizabeth frowned as thunder shook the house. She was trying to think, and there was a noise somewhere, and the fellow stood there stupidly watching her, waiting—for what? At last she turned on him irritably.

"Go down to the kitchen and dry yourself!" she said, noting how he dripped on to her carpet. "You must have ridden hard—you will want food, and a hot drink—they will give it you." And her eyes went back to the paper in her hand.

"I—I have—there is something more, your Grace," he stammered.

"More? What more?" It was enough already. She was rigid and unfriendly, because she wanted to think, and he stood there gawking.

He fumbled at his damp glove and his hand came out to her; within its curled fingers lay a small pellet of soiled paper. He glanced nervously over his shoulder as he tendered it, but she had sent her maid to summon Mrs. Ashley and they were still alone.

Elizabeth took the bit of paper from him swiftly, concealing it in her own palm.

"From whom?"

"I was not to say that, your Grace."

Frowning, she unrolled it. Five words in a handwriting she did not know: *The King will die to-night.*

"Who gave you this?"

"I was not to say that, your Grace," he repeated doggedly.

She rose and held it over a candle, watched it shrivel to her finger-tips, dropped it on the floor, set her foot on the ashes. Not Cecil's handwriting. Then who. . . . A trap? Which message was the trap? Which was the truth?

Again she turned on the sodden courier, all nerves.

"Oh, go and be fed!" she snapped, and then quickly, as he bowed—"Nay, never mind my tempers! You have done me a great service." And she held out her hand to him, and smiled.

The tired man stared—wavered—toUCHED his rain-wet lips to her slim fingers, and retired dizzily to the kitchen, forever her bondsman.

Elizabeth sat down and leaned her head on her two hands, the letter on the table before her. Edward was ill and wanted her. And then—Edward would die to-night. Was he as ill as that, or was he to be murdered? No, no, it was to everyone's advantage, except possibly Mary's, that Edward should live. Rumours had reached even to Hatfield, since Lady Jane's marriage—there were always leaks at Court and Parry had a nose for news. Parry had come only a few days since with a tale that Jane would try for the crown when Edward died. Easy to see who would be at the bottom of that.

But Edward wanted her. Her eyes were soft with tears. Poor lonely Edward, cheated of childhood even more than most royal children, ill, with no one to love or to trust—so he wrote to her, asking her to come. . . . But had he? Her eyes searched the letter, while the fact that it was not in Edward's handwriting, that he had not even signed it, took on significance. Why was that? He was too ill to write, perhaps—or else he did not know it had been sent. The summons was not Edward's own letter. She must not lose sight of that. True, it said come at once—but if he was to die

to-night she would still not be in time. She would arrive only for the confusion and upheaval which inevitably attends the death of a reigning monarch and the installation of his successor. Why, this would bring Mary to the throne—to-morrow.

She wondered if Mary had been summoned in the same way. The distance from Greenwich to Hunsdon was nearly equal, and Mary should receive her letter almost simultaneously, if one had been sent. And would Mary be informed, at the same time, that the King would die to-night? What was Mary doing and thinking now, only fifteen miles away? Did she know she would be Queen—to-morrow? The storm forced itself on Elizabeth's attention again, and she glanced at her curtained windows with the lightning flare cutting through. At least Mary would not start for Greenwich to-night.

One's impulse was all to run to Edward at once—he had the right to die in a sister's arms, when he asked it. But suppose one arrived too late—suppose the succession was disputed—where was Jane now, if she meant to claim Mary's crown?—in London, surely—there were two terrible words for what was in the air: *civil war*—the Catholics would rise for Mary—the Protestants would support Jane—if it should come to that—and Elizabeth herself was a Protestant—it put her on the wrong side, against her own sister, whom she was bound to uphold—it looked as though the best thing was not to be in London at all, if Edward died to-night.

Mary was the heir, and whatever happened it was her place to move first. One must be careful not to seem to crowd in, or tread on Mary's heels, or appear too anxious about the succession, which was none of one's own business—yet. Perhaps it would be wise to send to Mary in the morning, to inquire what she meant to do. . . . Elizabeth shook her head. No, she must think for herself. Besides, if they had not sent word to Mary, but only to herself, the summons might be a part of the plot to exclude Mary, and Catholicism, from the throne. According to Parry, such a thing was more than possible. And in that case a princess of the blood might find herself embroiled in some treasonable mess that could only end in wholesale slaughter on Tower Hill. Her eyes grew hard and bright. None of that. Mary's right must not be tampered with in any way; let Jane try that if she liked. Not Jane, of course, but the men who had taken Jane's obscure life in their reckless hands.

Elizabeth was determined that the difference in religion between herself and Mary should not be used to their undoing. Besides, any attempt to exclude Mary from the succession seemed predestined to failure. Because Mary was sickly and bigoted did not mean that she was weak. She had always had the terrible strength of obstinacy. Mary would fight for her crown. She would see herself as the divinely appointed champion of Rome in England. With the force of that tremendous conviction behind her, the chances were all that Mary would win. It would never do to be on the wrong side if Mary's right to the throne was going to be challenged.

What did they want with her in London, then? To back Jane

up, or to oppose her on her own account? Ah, but Jane was no concern of hers. Not yet. It was Mary's business to deal with Jane. Elizabeth washed her hands of that.

One could only sit still, then, and see what happened. Do nothing, always, as long as possible. Give Mary time to decide and to act; then play the same game. That was safest. No hare-brained schemes. Look at Thomas.

Meanwhile, if there were things like this afoot, where was Cecil? She had come to count on him. Surely he would have warned her. . . . Whose message was it, then? She must have another try at the courier when he had been fed and dried—a gold piece—a smile—he looked an honest lad, though. Honest? And had he not brought her two messages? Her lip curled. There were no honest men these days.

Well, let Mary deal with it. If Mary did nothing at all, it must mean that she had received no letter. For herself, it would be no great offence to lose a day or two in obeying a letter not even signed by the King. But she sighed. It seemed so heartless, to let Edward die alone among those ruffians there in London. She would have liked to comfort him, the best she could. She would hardly have resisted a personal appeal from him, one which she could have been sure was genuine. But as for this document before her now—no need to reply to it just yet—she could say she had been indisposed, uncertain as to when she would be able to travel—God knew, her temples were throbbing with intolerable pain.

Mrs. Ashley found her a few moments later still staring at the letter, her head between her hands. They read it through together, with very few words, and looked at each other, and shook their heads. Then Elizabeth went back to her book, and Mrs. Ashley drew her embroidery frame close to the light of the same candles. Except for their busy brains, and the thoughtful silence between them, it was as though the letter from Greenwich had not come.

VII

Mary had gone to bed before the summons reached Hunsdon. She sat up against her pillows to read it, while her waiting-woman held a candle which dripped wax on the coverlet, and the wind and rain tore at the windows of her chamber.

Edward wanted her. He was ill—dying, perhaps—her brother and her King. Alone among heretics and despots, he thought of her. Mary was touched. She gave orders for an early start on the morrow, but slept ill, because of a dog that howled under her windows until dawn.

The morning of the seventh was clear but sultry. Mary intended to spend that night at her house in Clerkenwell and proceed to Greenwich on the eighth. In spite of her brusque impatience and the irritable scurry of the servants, the summer day had worn on by the time they were ready.

Travel was slow with a train of ladies on horseback, and pokey mules carrying luggage for an indefinite stay. The midday heat required a long halt at nooning, and so it was nearly three o'clock when they passed through the village of Hoddesdon, listless in the afternoon sunshine, half-way to London.

As they reached its further outskirts a solitary horseman came galloping towards them from the south, and pulled up abruptly beside Andrew Huddleston, Mary's steward, who rode first in her little procession. The horse had not been spared and was in a lather. The man was hatless, panting, and wet with sweat; his first words were hardly intelligible.

"Back!" he gasped, with a frantic gesture along the road they had come. "Turn back—they are close behind me!"

The awkward cavalcade had come to a stumbling standstill, with a whispering and rustling among the mounted ladies. Mary's near-sighted eyes strained helplessly to recognize the dust-caked messenger—she could not see beyond her horse's ears.

"Her Grace rides to London. Why turn back?" demanded Huddleston.

"Dudley and his men—left Greenwich this morning—it is a plot—they are coming to take her prisoner—"

"What is the meaning of this?" rasped Mary's voice. "Come nearer, fellow. Who sent you?"

The man urged his heaving horse a few steps onward and dismounted, to stand beside her stirrup.

"I come from Greenwich, your Grace—I was to have started last night, but they closed the gates—I managed to slip out to-day, amongst Lord Robert's men—" He sent a desperate glance over his shoulder along the empty road. "—They stopped in London for dinner—I had to come the longer way round—but they are bound for Hunsdon over this road—your Grace must ride north—anywhere to escape them—but do not go to London now—not to London—" He leaned dizzily on his horse's neck, bareheaded in the sun.

"I ride to Greenwich," rasped Mary. "The King has sent for me."

"*The King is dead!*"

A whispering echo of the dreadful words ran along the waiting line of her mounted household, to the farthest mule-boy. Mary gripped her saddle-horn and stared at him stonily.

"When?"

"Last night, your Grace. They are keeping it secret—there is a double guard at the Palace and things go on there as usual—they—they even speak of him as—not dead—but they will proclaim Lady Jane as soon as they have secured your Grace's person—it means the Tower—I was to say—*ride north*—"

There was no doubting his exhaustion and his panic, but Mary sat immovable, her little, red-rimmed eyes boring into him.

"How can I be sure of this? How do you know the King is dead?"

"My master—your Grace, we were there—at Greenwich. Even

before it happened—when the Duke of Northumberland sent to Hunsdon yesterday—we knew——”

“ Who sent you to me ? ”

“ I was to say—a friend.”

Mary made an ugly, disbelieving sound.

“ His name ! ”

The man cast another glance over his shoulder at the empty road which stretched away Londonwards in the heat. They were losing precious minutes. Dudley and his men would come into sight at any minute. Desperately he threw everything into the scales.

“ I serve the Earl of Arundel ! ” he gasped, very low.

Mary pondered, while her ladies fidgeted and whispered, and Huddleston watched the London road. Arundel, was it—Lord Chamberlain to her father once—for a time Governor of Calais—mentioned in the old King’s will, though not one of the original Council of sixteen appointed for the minority—unjustly imprisoned and fined at the time of Somerset’s fall—a family grudge against the Greys—no, Arundel would hardly love Northumberland, and he might well call himself her friend.

“ Have you this in writing ? ” she demanded.

“ Your Grace, he dared not send a letter——”

Still she pondered. Yes, surely, of all the lords of the Council, Arundel was the safest. Cranmer went with the current always—they had put Gardiner in the Tower long ago—Cecil was a heretic, Paget a thief—but Arundel might well be loyal, and warn her of a plot against the crown. The crown—why, it was hers now ! Realization flooded through her—she was Queen ! She found it hard to conceive. Edward—poor sick boy—the King—was dead. So soon. No one had expected it would come so soon. She had thought to have some warning—she was unprepared—it was not thus, in the middle of the road, from the lips of a common groom, she had expected to receive that portentous announcement. She was Queen, and there was a conspiracy to rob her of the throne. . . . Her face reddened slowly with her Tudor wrath.

“ Traitors ! ” she broke out suddenly, as the full meaning of all this came home to her. “ Traitors and heretics all ! And that base, ungrateful girl, to pretend a fondness for me and now usurp my throne ! So they have laid a trap for me—and I had wellnigh set my foot in it, but for your master ! I will remember that. Dudley, is it—and the Tower ! ” She looked round angrily on the scared group of her huddling household, caught the steward’s eye, and gathered up her reins. “ I will go to Kenninghall,” she said. (It was eighty miles as the crow flies ; a pleasant Norfolk mansion, part of the confiscated property of the Howards, and her favourite residence.)

“ If your Grace would honour my uncle’s house for to-night——” Huddleston suggested eagerly.

“ Where is that ? ”

“ Sawston Hall, near Cambridge.”

“ Cambridge is a hotbed of heretics.”

" You will be safe at Sawston, I promise you. 'Twould break the journey midway."

Mary turned her horse.

" Lead, then," she said. " No stragglers. See they keep the pace." She glanced back to the messenger beside his drooping mount, and paused to render justly but without grace the thanks which were due. " If this is as you say—you have done me a service. Come to me at Kenninghall." The man bowed humbly. " Now, Andrew—to Sawston ! " She drove home her spurs.

Unwieldily the little train turned itself in the roadway ; grimly the pace was set and kept. It was thirty miles to Sawston, along a road which ran well west of Hunsdon, leading north.

So Robert Dudley surrounded a deserted house that afternoon, and found no clues. Her Grace had left for London and vanished on the road. For a few hours he patrolled the neighbourhood futilely, wondering what to do, wondering if by any chance she had joined Elizabeth at Hatfield. He had no orders about Hatfield, and wanted none. And so he returned empty-handed to London, half-hoping to find her there before him.

VIII

Meanwhile the Council, acting on Northumberland's lead, with Suffolk trailing nervously behind, had taken possession of the Tower, including the royal treasure and supplies of munitions. There they were joined by many of the nobility—Northumberland trusted no one out of his sight. The place became a sort of armed court, still lacking its Queen, for Jane had not yet been told of her new grandeur.

The same night that the Council moved into town from Greenwich another message arrived at Hatfield—a scrap of paper which bore the one word : *Wait*. Elizabeth smiled as she read it, for she knew that capital W well. But someone had been before Will Cecil this time. She wondered again who that could be, for his man had disappeared from her kitchen within an hour. She was waiting.

Not even Northumberland realized at once the calamity of allowing Mary to escape him. No one actually blamed Robert ; and it would have seemed madness to question that his heart was altogether in his undertaking. Robert himself began to be uneasy. What good to have warned Elizabeth, if Mary was Queen ? Would that save him from the charge of treason ?

On the night of the ninth the Council received a letter from Mary written at Kenninghall ; willing and industrious spies had by now brought her fuller details which might well have dismayed her completely. But Mary's letter called the Council roundly to account, and then graciously promised a general pardon if they dropped their dangerous foolishness and proclaimed her at once.

It was their last chance and they threw it away. To the lords of the Council, snug in the Tower, she was a feeble, lone woman

without resources, a fugitive princess asserting theoretical rights which she would be quite unable to maintain. They held the City, and the Government—they held a Queen. They dispatched a high answer within the hour, asserting their allegiance to Lady Jane, reminding Mary of her mother's divorce and her own illegitimacy, and concluding with these ominous words : “ . . . assuring you that if you will for respect show yourself quiet and obedient, as you ought, you shall find us all and several ready to do you any service that we with duty may, and be glad with your quietness, to preserve the common state of this realm : wherein you may be otherwise grievous unto us, to yourself and to them. Your ladyship's friends, showing yourself an obedient subject—” This was signed by all of them, and Arundel's name appeared among the rest. He had to trust her to understand that so far he could serve her best by remaining where he was.

Mary's cause looked hopeless to nearly everyone but herself. The Emperor's ambassador proved utterly useless, and only advised her to submit herself at once to the mercy of the Council. Charles's power was no longer what it had been, France was supposed to be on Northumberland's side, and Renard dared not involve his master in what seemed to him the forlornest of hopes. It looked sheer madness for a woman, frail in health and inexperienced in worldly matters, to set herself against the carefully devised campaign of the Duke of Northumberland. Besides, he was in possession. Mary wrote Renard off her brief list of assets. The Emperor had failed her, but she was too busy to grieve. She spent hours at her writing-table, summoning to her support the loyal country gentry who formed the backbone of the Catholic party, sending out her own proclamations of her accession through the north and west.

Lady Jane had been brought from Chelsea to Sion, Northumberland's mansion on the River above the city. There she received the news of her cousin Edward's death with childish tears of dutiful affection, and was completely prostrated by the announcement of the part she was now to play. The lords of the Council knelt to her at Sion, which was terrifying to her habitual timid insignificance. On the afternoon of the tenth she was conducted by barge with royal ceremony to the Tower. The day was fine, the sun shone on her green velvet and jewelled coif, but the populace stared and mumbled and would not cheer. Guildford, tall and fair in white and gold, walked beside her in the procession from the landing-place to the Hall, his cap in his hand. Her mother carried her train, which upset her lifelong ideas of propriety. She entered the Tower feeling more like a prisoner than a sovereign, and was installed in the royal apartments, which seemed to her sacrilege. And there she sat down under the canopy of state and dissolved into tears again.

“ *Jane, by the grace of God, Queen of England, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith and of the Church of England, and also of Ireland, under Christ on earth the supreme head. . . .* ” The voices of the heralds could be plainly heard in the sullen silence which greeted their proclamation of Jane's accession to the throne of England. There

were no cheers, no loyal shouts of "God save the Queen!" The people knew almost nothing of Jane—but more than enough of her father-in-law, the Duke of Northumberland. "*. . . to disturb, repel, and resist the feigned and untrue claim of the Lady Mary, bastard daughter to our great uncle Henry the Eighth, of famous memory. . . .*" She was expected to sign her name to words which horrified her to the bottom of her unassuming soul—and her small hand shook as she wrote.

At the same time Mary's declaration of her rights rang through the north of England, stirring the simple country folk, and rousing them to arms in her forlorn cause : "*Know ye, all the good subjects of this realm, that your most noble prince, your Sovereign Lord and King, Edward VI, is upon Thursday last being the sixth of July departed this world to God's mercy. And that now the most excellent princess, his sister Mary, by the grace of God is Queen of England and Ireland, and very owner of the crown, government and title of England and Ireland and all things thereunto belonging, to God's glory, the honour of the realm of England, and all your comforts. And her Highness is not fled this realm, nor intendeth to do, as is most untruly surmised.*"

Jane, unwilling usurper, cowered under her canopy of state in the Tower and would not stop crying. She had not wanted to be Guildford's wife ; she had not dreamed of being Edward's heir ; and least of all did she desire to be Queen of England. She wept when they brought her the crown, and shrank from trying it on. She wept when they proposed to place her father at the head of a little army which was being sent into Norfolk after Mary, and begged to keep him with her in London ; he was the only anchor she had ever had, except Seymour. This request was unexpectedly granted, in a world where her desires carried no weight whatever. Some of the lords interceded for her, reminding Northumberland that he was the soldier, not Suffolk ; they implied that he would succeed where Suffolk might fail. He admitted the truth of this, in a momentary complacence.

Jane was making herself ill with her own apprehensions, and insisted that she had been poisoned by her mother-in-law, which was not a reasonable accusation in the circumstances. They could hardly have done without her now. Only once in the midst of her collapse did her sturdy Tudor ancestry assert itself. Young Guildford gave himself kingly airs and demanded a crown of his own ; whereat Lady Jane, shocked to the depths, declared that even as Queen she had no power to raise her husband higher than a dukedom, and refused to consider him as a consort. The crown, said Jane, was not a toy for children to play with. There was another scene, and it was Guildford who wept this time, while his mother took his part. Jane was obdurate ; but she gave him some of the royal jewels, as one bestows trinkets on a fretful child.

Even a Tudor once removed could not be bullied into sharing even an unwanted throne. She was unable to comprehend this greed for pomp and power. There was no time for books and study, when one was Queen. She wept again for the lost days at

Bradgate, and the long, leisurely sessions with John Aylmer, and still weeping, tried to hope that perhaps later things would settle down a bit. . . .

Meanwhile the news from the country was disquieting. Mary's supporters were rallying to her standard at Kenninghall by thousands. Northumberland saw too late that in the beginning everything should have been subordinated to her capture. He had lost several more days in indecision and argument with the rest of the Council, but on the fourteenth he rode out on this important mission himself, after an almost tearful farewell with his spoilt, beloved Guildford. His sons Ambrose and Robert rode beside him. The Earl of Arundel wished him luck, and watched him out of sight with a small, cold smile.

The populace crowded to see them pass, to speculate and prophesy, but none bade him God-speed. He had six hundred horsemen armed with rather motley weapons ; his guns and provision carts were to follow next day. He had already declared himself irrevocably to the fuming Emperor, and his son Henry had gone to France to try and cement the doubtful alliance promised by Henry II. Nothing had been left undone, since that first tremendous omission, but the Duke was far from confident as he rode north.

Mary's loyal forces were mustering, cheerfully prepared for civil war. Among the first to join her was the old Earl of Sussex, who had served Wolsey and her father, and had hated Somerset. She made him captain of her daily increasing army. Sir Henry Bedingfield came with his armed tenantry ; and the very ships sent by the Council to guard the Coast against her possible escape to the Continent deserted to her under the command of Sir Henry Jerningham, bringing with them a welcome supply of munitions.

Day and night the dusty Norfolk lanes were alive with men prepared to fight for the daughter of the old King. Their weapons were anything from scythes to swords, and they often had no idea of where their next meal would come from, or where they would find lodging and shelter. They asked no pay, and they made only one stipulation ; many of those who were readiest to lay down their lives in defence of the rightful heir were nevertheless not Catholics, and they wanted reassurance of future freedom in their religious views. Mary, touched and proud at such a prompt and generous response to her appeals, promised readily that she would never interfere in the private matter of their worship. Whereupon they cheered her lustily in their travel-stained hundreds, and spoke with fond reminiscence of her father.

They loved the line for its own sake, as much as they resented the upstart Dudleys. And this was no sickly female bigot. This was a Tudor fighting for a throne, even as her grandfather had done in 1485.

Her more experienced generals looked to her defences and were dissatisfied. The country was too open, the house not strong enough to stand a siege. On their advice she removed to Framlingham, a hill-side fortress near enough the Coast—one could see the sea from

its square watch-towers—to keep the back door open, though she had no intention of flight. It lay deep in the Suffolk woodlands, and was approached by winding forest lanes. The source of the River Orr fed its three girdling moats, where late golden iris bloomed. Like Kenninghall, it was part of the old Duke of Norfolk's forfeit property, and its Catholic governor was glad to place it at Mary's disposal.

She arrived there at night, having ridden the twenty miles from Kenninghall without drawing bridle. At the head of a small mounted force, she passed the old Saxon church and ascended the walled causeway, while wavering torchlight gleamed on the polished harness of her guardsmen, and lit up the tired white faces of her equestrian maids-of-honour. Soon the royal standard of England was flying above the Howard arms on the ancient gate tower.

The country round about became a military camp, while Mary issued her commands and laid her plans with the calm assurance and tirelessness of a veteran in the field. Trees were cut down across the narrow lanes, and sentries set against a possible attack. Five hundred men were appointed as a personal guard to Mary. Sussex, Bedingfield, and the rest looked on with growing approval. Blood. Blood would tell every time. She was her father's daughter.

In the beginning Mary had had only her small household and her stout-hearted ladies-in-waiting to back her up in her bold defiance. Now the aggregate went on growing every hour. She had acted alone, out of her own conviction of right and wrong, counting on only a few loyal men who had known and served her father to stake their lives on her risk. A little, faded, harsh-voiced woman without charm, without the accessories of royalty, without a regular army or a treasury, she commanded an enthusiastic host which was ready to serve her at its own expense and find its own provisions meanwhile.

Things were not going so well with the Duke of Northumberland. Disappointed of the reinforcements he had expected at Cambridge, he was sending back peevish demands to London for supplies and more men. It seemed to him that the Council was doing all it could to bungle and hamper his relief, and Cecil's promised contingent simply never arrived at all. Mary had put a price on Northumberland's head ; his soldiers were deserting, rats from a doomed ship. All Buckinghamshire had risen in arms for Mary, and his own tenantry refused to serve against her. No one had expected that she could make any such stand as this. Renard, all ears, waited in London, while his first conviction that she was bound to be led in, a captive, gave way to a more and more incredulous surprise.

At the end of the week Northumberland was stranded in Cambridge, with a mere handful. His sons remained with him, and a few loyal servants. There should have been two of him, for while he was indeed his own best general he should never have left London. Once his back was turned and only Suffolk was in charge of the Tower, the lords of the Council looked at one another

questioningly. The city had fallen over Sunday into rioting confusion, with bonfires in the streets, small religious battles, any and all kinds of unreasoning conflict. Jane was still crying herself sick, and could not sleep.

At last Arundel spoke his mind, with a glance round at the gloomy walls of the palace-prison. "I like not the air here," he said. Cecil objected to it too. On the pretence of entertaining the French ambassador with regard to foreign reinforcements for Northumberland—to satisfy Suffolk's sense of responsibility for their movements—most of the lords, who had been practically Northumberland's prisoners in the Tower, withdrew to Pembroke's house on the River. There at an excitable meeting speeches were made and swords were drawn for Mary. They sent for the Lord Mayor. On the afternoon of the nineteenth at the Cross in Cheapside, Mary was proclaimed Queen of England amid the delighted roars of a riotous populace. The very words of the proclamation were drowned out in the glad ringing of church bells and a general delirious clamour. London laughed and cried for joy.

Suffolk fell into panic when he saw what was happening. With some idea of identifying himself with Mary's victorious cause before it was utterly too late, he himself hurried out to proclaim her from Tower Hill, and then returned to tell Jane what he had done. Her tears were magically dried. She understood that her brief, unwelcome royalty was over. It was the best news she had heard for a long time. "Now can I go home?" she queried hopefully. But the door had closed hastily behind her father, and she was left alone again.

Towards evening some brusque guardsmen arrived with orders from the Council, and Jane's small belongings were bundled out of the royal apartments by her weeping women. They told her that her father and mother had gone to their house at Sheen, and the Duchess of Northumberland had departed for Sion. Nobody seemed to know where Guildford was, and Jane did not care. Nobody told her what to do, and she had no ideas of her own. A few of her personal attendants remained with her, tearful and awed.

There was dancing and singing and drinking all night long in the streets of London, with tables laid in the gutters for free banquets, and more bonfires. The church bells were still ringing when the early summer dawn came. The exultant noise penetrated to where Jane sat abandoned in the royal fortress which had become her prison. She had nowhere to go except the lesser rooms assigned to her in the Council's orders, and was only thankful it was not a dungeon.

Not quite understanding, she sat quietly waiting, while her women sobbed. She supposed that Mary would come soon. Mary had been kind to her in the old days, and had given her gowns and trinkets. She was not afraid of Mary. Surely Mary would understand that she had not meant to be Queen?

So for Jane the strange, brief interlude ended.

IX

And Elizabeth ?

Elizabeth had taken to her bed at Hatfield at the very beginning of these alarms and excursions, and remained there, obstinately ill. Before long, commissioners had arrived from the Duke of Northumberland to announce the accession of Lady Jane ; and to make an offer, too magnificent to be called a bribe, if the Lady Elizabeth would renounce all claim to the throne and passively accept the sovereignty of her cousin Jane as dictated by the terms of the late King's will. . . .

Elizabeth received them in her chamber, looking pale and fragile, and heard them out with a visible, growing surprise. When they paused expectantly at the conclusion of that spectacular offer she professed herself astonished that she had been considered of any importance at all in these great matters of state. She pointed out to them modestly that she could not well renounce what was not hers—for Mary, not she, was the heir. She suggested humbly that they should make their bargain first with Mary. And as she was not at all well, perhaps they would excuse her from the exertion of a prolonged interview. . . .

They rode away not quite sure what had happened to them. Apparently they had been dismissed, with the bribe still on their hands. But assuredly her Grace had looked very ill, and was perhaps not quite herself. At least she was in no condition to make trouble for a while.

Elizabeth went grimly back to bed. So it had come, just as she feared. Edward was dead—she would never have been in time—and Jane held the Tower, and Mary—where was Mary ? She had had to pretend to know—she could not have asked those men—but as yet she had received no indication of Mary's whereabouts or intentions, and she had no way to judge the extent of Northumberland's prospects. He might send her to the Tower at once if she resisted his wishes with regard to Lady Jane. On the other hand, Mary had a perfect right to send her to the Tower if she was foolhardy enough to identify her interests in any way with the usurper's. It did not much matter why she went there, or by whose orders, the result was likely to be much the same. Meanwhile, she did not find it difficult to seem ill. Wait.

But by the first of August Mary's way to the throne was clear. The dry, white road to Framlingham crawled with apologists, all having excellent reasons for not arriving there sooner. Renard, since she had achieved the impossible without his support, was full of praise. Arundel was reaping his reward, first in the satisfaction of personally arresting Northumberland at Cambridge and conducting him to the Tower ; second in receiving the post of Steward of Mary's household. Robert Dudley had fetched up in the Tower, after an unsuccessful attempt to do belated homage to the new Queen at Framlingham and receive her pardon. He had not been

able to communicate with Elizabeth and could claim no support from her. Guildford was in the Tower, too, and Jane had never left it. Suffolk was let off on the plea of his wife, who rode into the country to tell Mary that she feared for his life in confinement, and to remind her of their close blood-tie, with fond references to dear Uncle Henry. Cecil's elaborate explanations were also accepted and he retained his freedom, but retired prudently into the country to become absorbed in his horticultural hobbies. Mary, in the first reaction of relief at the ease and simplicity of her victory, had no thought of reprisals.

Her slow journey to London through Ipswich, Beaulieu, and Wanstead, became a royal progress. She had come into her own without bloodshed or violence to her people, and they lined her way shouting and throwing up caps. When the news reached Elizabeth that the Queen was on the way to take up an official residence in the Tower her recovery was miraculous. Once more she had guessed right. She sent her felicitations and was bidden to join the Queen at some point along the road and enter London in the royal procession. Mary found her waiting at Wanstead, bright-eyed and sweetly submissive, surrounded by a colourful cluster of her household ladies and gentlemen.

Mary kissed her fondly, and made much of her, to the approval of the watching multitude at the roadside. Mary was secretly glad that she had not had trouble with Elizabeth too. And thus they entered London side by side on the third of August about seven in the evening, through streets hung with banners and lovely with the voices of a children's choir. The guard wore the Tudor colours, green and white, and carried bows and javelins. There was no visible mourning for Edward, unless Mary's own violet gown was a concession in that direction.

Mary was thirty-seven. The dark flush which excitement always brought was almost becoming in her hour of triumph. She rode a small white horse which ambled patiently through the cheering crowds, the gold fringe of its splendid housings rippling round its spiritless shanks. Mary smiled, and made stiff, shy bows in acknowledgment of her people's enthusiasm, which rather overcame her, accustomed as she was to a quiet life in the country.

The noise and the happy tumult were like wine to Elizabeth, riding erect and sober slightly to her sister's rear, the sunset rosy on her pale face, glinting on her bright hair. She tried hard to look demure and unimportant, she tried to submerge herself in Mary's triumph, but it was hers, too, and her eyes would rove among the crowd, catching other eyes here and there with open friendliness ; her lips would curve into delighted smiles. A small child held up to see the Queen saw Elizabeth instead and crowed and reached out ineffectual fat arms to her. Elizabeth laughed aloud, and glanced back over her shoulder again as she passed to exchange a last look with its proud mother.

So while they cheered the Queen lustily, their admiring eyes lingered on the Queen's sister—so young, so merry, so ready to be

friends. And at last the procession came to the Tower in the long summer twilight picked out by the first torches, amid the din of church bells and cannon and the shouting of the populace. Jane heard, and strove bravely to remember Mary's kindness in the old days.

She had wept all her tears while she was Queen, and now she sat dry-eyed and passive, awaiting whatever new disasters her destiny would bring. She was not uncomfortable in her new quarters, and she had never been formally arrested. She might even have escaped from her prison if she had had anyone to advise her or anywhere to go. She had almost no books—there had been no room for them in the luggage of a queen. The hot scent of roses came in through her open casement from the Tower gardens—the roses had never been so lovely as this year. Doubtless it was because of the thunderstorms, which had never been so violent, with patches of bright, baking sunshine in between.

The Marquis of Winchester had come to collect from her the last shreds of royalty, in the form of overlooked crown jewels, money, hangings—the very clothes she had worn. No one else came, and Mary did not send for her. She knew that her father and mother were somewhere in the Queen's retinue. They had been forgiven, it seemed. Doubtless it was only right that she, who had tried on the crown and (however shakily) had signed herself *Regina*, should stay where she was.

X

A month later Elizabeth's twentieth birthday found her still at Court, bestowing smiles and graciousness on an ever larger circle of admirers. Her impartiality was a thing to wonder at. She was glad to see them all.

Many of the same faces were there which she had known in 1551 ; except for Cecil, who remained in the country, growing things ; and Robert Dudley in the Tower. The Earl of Arundel made her gallant speeches, and Lord William Howard, one of that numerous family of half- and step-relations of Anne Boleyn's, gave her wise, friendly looks. She liked Lord William, knowing he had been her father's friend. Noailles, apparently much smitten, was always at her heels.

She was aware that Renard hated the sight of her, and that it was useless to try to win him—she was elaborately polite to him always, with her chin held high and a knowing gleam in her eyes. As for the glowerings of the Chancellor, Bishop Gardiner, whom Mary had released from the Tower where he had been sent by Edward's Protestant Council—Elizabeth seemed not to notice at all.

The most important newcomer on her horizon was Edward Courtenay, another of Mary's protégés from the Tower ; a handsome young man of twenty-seven, with light brown curls and the skin of a girl, and the oldest blood of England in his veins. The

Courtenays were relatives of Reginald Pole, whose disgrace in 1538 had brought the whole family to the Tower. Edward was a child of twelve then, and he had grown up in the prison where his father died, without a glimpse of the outer world. He was the heir of a family which had been dear to Mary in her girlhood, son of a woman she regarded as her close friend. She had lost no time about restoring his estates and titles, and now as the young Earl of Devonshire he was cutting a wide swath at Court. Elizabeth was not taken with him, and treated him somewhat cavalierly ; she would unbend till he grew bold ; then score off him good-naturedly to set his girlish blush flaming to the roots of his fair hair, and leave him uncertain of his whereabouts.

Mary was restoring the Court as fast as she could on insufficient funds to the regal splendour of her father's day. Once more there was music and colour and great pageantry of religion. The nation had been grievously impoverished during the grasping rule of the Council—vagabondage, slavery, poor coinage, near famine, and pestilence had dogged the whole of Edward's grey reign. Except for the Jews, Mary had no treasury at all, and her lack of ready money was visible in the very meals which were served at her table. But fine clothes she would have, the rustle of rich fabrics, and an illusion anyway of the gay, lavish days of her childhood when Rome ruled in England.

Thanks to Mary's courage and prompt action, the Protestant revolution had been still-born. Its progenitor, Northumberland, and two of his captains, were beheaded in August ; only three out of seven condemned. Mary showed herself a most generous victor ; for though Northumberland's sons and Lady Jane all received the death sentence before the year was out, she had no intention of exacting from them the full penalty. She was softened by her own popularity, a new and delicious sensation. Warmed by the hearty welcome and affection of her people, she had no desire for vengeance.

But inevitably a rift soon opened between the sisters. They stood for opposite things. Even though Elizabeth had taken no part in the plot to rob her of the throne, Mary could not for long overlook the uneasy fact that Elizabeth was not a Catholic, and therefore must be a sort of rival to her own hard-won, jealous power.

The question of Edward's funeral rites was the first to arise. The corpse of the dead King was still at Greenwich awaiting burial when Mary entered London, for no one with any authority had had time for Edward during that perilous month of change and turmoil.

The Emperor, speaking through Renard, cautiously advised a heretic service for a heretic king, for he dreaded that Mary might alienate her subjects by a sudden tactless change of religion. To this Mary cried out in horror that she would not have her brother committed to the ground like a dog. It ended in compromise. There was a shabby, ill-lighted Church of England service in the Abbey with Cranmer officiating, which Mary ignored ; and a Catholic Requiem Mass in the Tower Chapel, which Elizabeth refused to attend.

Renard seized upon her absence as proof that she meant to form a party of her own in opposition to the Queen's Catholic policy. Most of the Court and Council, among whom were many guilty consciences, had submitted more or less gracefully to Mary's wishes ; it soon became certain that she meant to retract her promise of religious toleration given in those doubtful July days at Framlingham. Mary was safe now, and the throne was hers. So she set about at once to break her word.

Elizabeth had always known that she was the hope and pride of the Reformation party, on whom her own claim to the throne would one day depend. For mere legitimacy's sake, she could not desert the religion in which she had been reared. And Mary, in the interests of her own legitimacy, was determined to impose upon her realm and her sister the faith which upheld the marriage of Catherine of Aragon. It was the old, old dilemma—they could not both have been born in lawful wedlock.

Renard went about in a state of permanent dissatisfaction these days. The Emperor had recommended clemency, it was true, but not a general amnesty, and Mary's lenience amounted in Renard's eyes to carelessness. Convinced that Lady Jane had been the merest puppet in Northumberland's hands, Mary refused to order her execution carried out, and her parents—professing a sudden Catholicism—actually held respected places at Court. Apparently neither of them was willing to risk their precarious safety by trying to intercede for Jane ; ever since that first day of dismay and confusion they had heartlessly left her to her fate.

But most of all, Renard beheld Elizabeth's enormous popularity with a growing nervousness, and resented his own appreciation of her gay charm—that strange, youthful magnetism of hers which he described grudgingly to the Emperor as "*un esprit plein d'incantation.*" Renard found himself almost wanting to like Elizabeth for her own sake—and that would not do at all. So in the intervals of urging Lady Jane's execution, he began to pursue the Queen's sister with a more than ordinary enmity.

Next to the religious controversy, and crowding it to the wall in the public mind, came the matter of the Queen's marriage. Naturally no woman, certainly no virgin, was capable of ruling England alone.

The Emperor, via Renard, was full of advice on this subject, too. The French were equally concerned about her choice of a bridegroom, for the old imperial quarrel which Henry II had inherited from Francis I still dragged on, and with the English marriage would go the balance of European power. England, with its perennial insular hatred of foreigners, was agog.

Mary began by regarding her marriage as a hateful necessity, the supreme sacrifice of her maidenhood to the welfare of Church and State. And as usual she promised the thing which made for her personal peace and prestige at the moment ; she assured her people and her councillors that she would never marry against their wishes.

Charles was writing her long, illegible letters recommending immediate marriage with someone—he was careful not to limit or dictate her choice. Mary read his views dutifully, as far as she could make them out. In this sudden dizzying wrench to power at nearly forty, it was only natural that she should depend on him, a lifelong landmark, and his guidance was for the most part sound. She promised to obey him like a father, she said, in regard to the marriage—and implored him not to urge upon her a person she knew nothing of; or worse, a man who was too young. She protested repeatedly that she had thought to end her days a spinster, and that even now she had no real desire for matrimony. She explained conscientiously that, being a woman, she could not make the first advances, in any case.

Charles obligingly produced half a dozen candidates for her consideration, and she complained at once and with some justice that she was old enough to be the mother of any one of them. She also added another inconvenient stipulation—she wanted an interview with the intended bridegroom before they committed themselves in writing.

Meanwhile Chancellor Gardiner nursed an idea of his own, which was bound to appeal to the homely sentiment of the English, always so suspicious of outsiders. During those long seven years which Gardiner spent in the Tower while the Council ruled, he had become attached to young Courtenay, who called him father, and treated his views on most subjects with a truly filial lack of respect. Courtenay's mother, the Marchioness of Exeter, who had loyally endured imprisonment with her husband until his death in 1538, was now the Queen's bosom companion, and for company in the wakeful nights which cursed Mary's existence, Lady Gertrude even shared the royal bed. What more fitting, Gardiner wanted to know, than that Edward Courtenay, the last male Plantagenet in England, should become king consort? Mary, looking askance at his youth and inexperience, replied drily that she would wait and see how he came on. She soon saw, and was shocked.

He was well read and accomplished in music and other solitary arts, from his cloistered prison life. She had liked and pitied him in the beginning, and so she petted and spoilt him. She gave him a fine diamond which old King Henry had worn, and allowed him to make his own choice of a house in the City suitable to his restored dignity. She appointed a gentleman of her suite to act as a sort of duenna, lest he go astray among the mysteries of this belated liberty—and Courtenay, who preferred to lose himself, complained that she treated him like a child, and was rude to his mentor.

Freedom, rank, and favours, after fourteen years of the Tower, had gone entirely to Courtenay's head. For the first time in his life he had money to spend, friends to drink and gamble with, women to love. Courtenay ran wild. At first his partisans looked on indulgently, for he was much in arrears with his youth and good times. The populace was inclined to idolize him, and winked at his excessive amusements. Gradually it became apparent, even to

them, that he was carrying things a bit too far, and Gardiner tried in vain to curb him.

Mary's narrow spinsterhood shied at his notorious intemperances. She had time to reflect that he was after all more than ten years younger than she was, and that moreover he was behaving like a raw lad let loose on the town. When Gardiner continued to urge the match on the grounds of his own affection for Courtenay, she inquired tartly if she was to make a man her husband because her Chancellor had formed a fondness for him in prison.

The imperial ambassador was careful to keep her abreast of Courtenay's indiscretions, and reported to her that the Earl was also hand in glove with the French. It was true that Noailles entertained him at his house, flattered him with insinuations that Mary was infatuated with him, and did his best to engender royal ambition in a puny soul. A small court had formed round the boy. His supposed influence with the Queen was eagerly purchased. He affected to choose only Catholics for followers and intimates, and dwelt privately on the analogy between his proposed marriage with the Tudor sovereign and that of his great aunt Elizabeth of York with Henry VII. Once again the two old lines of English royalty would merge. Privately, too, he was finicky about the age and plainness of the Queen. But meanwhile he would have a good time.

Before long his name was being linked also with Elizabeth's. This was largely Noailles' doing, a part of the deep French scheme which at first was not apparent to anybody, even to the wary Elizabeth herself. Noailles fostered a project whereby Courtenay was to be married to Elizabeth instead of Mary, and a rival claim set up which would either overturn Mary's right or destroy the young couple in the attempt. Either way, France was bound to benefit. With Mary and Elizabeth both out of the way, Mary Stuart would inherit England, for by September she was openly spoken of as the only possible Catholic heir if the Queen died childless. As Mary Stuart was soon to become the bride of the Dauphin, England would thus become an appendage of France, and the imperial goose would be nicely cooked at last.

It was a tortuous business, and Noailles worked at it patiently, with fiendish skill. He failed to realize at once that one of his pawns on this international chessboard was a potential queen. Elizabeth coquettled with him, led him on shamelessly, to the disgust of the Catholic faction. Mary said that obviously she was not Anne Boleyn's daughter for nothing.

French suavities and French humour were new to Elizabeth, who had been isolated most of her life from even the clumsier gallantries and *divertissements* of the English court. Moreover, in Noailles's dark eyes and charming impertinences she caught the faint Latin echo of an old enchantment. . . . And so the brazen flirtation went on. She thoroughly enjoyed it. So did he. But he should have given her credit for knowing that she played with fire.

Elizabeth by now had less use than ever for Courtenay, and he was

half afraid of her upstanding vitality and imperious ways. He was chary, too, of any sort of impediment to his present hilarious mode of existence. He was amusing himself. Let well enough alone. And as he piled debauchery upon dissipation, Mary let it be known that she would never marry a subject—her father had done enough of that. Anyway, her inclinations were all towards something more stable and less gaudy than the Earl of Devonshire. It was about this time that she received a letter from Reginald Pole, who was still living in Italy under the Papal wing, though he had not yet taken final orders.

With Pole's letter in her hand, Mary went adrift in reminiscence. She had not seen him for—heavens, twenty years. But once their marriage had been talked of, and their mothers had been friends. Like Courtenay he was descended from the old Yorkist line into which Owen Tudor's son had contrived to marry three generations ago, and was of equally royal lineage. She tried to remember his face, once so clear to her mind's eye. She counted up time on her fingers—he would be fifty-three now. Years of discretion. They would have much to talk about, if ever they met again. . . .

He had no personal ambition, she knew, and few human weaknesses ever. Doubtless he was happy where he was. Happy? It was hardly the word for the arid contentment of a born churchman. Wistfully she scanned again the dry pages of his letter. There was nothing there to set her dreaming. He urged the restitution of Church lands, appropriated by her father and his successors, and entreated an immediate reunion of England with Rome. All this fitted in with her own desires, which were being hampered by the Emperor's caution. But not one word here of himself, or her, or the memories they shared. . . . She wrote, summoning him back to England.

Still it was Gardiner, despairing of his protégé, who first actually aired the idea of her possible marriage with Pole. He did not like Pole, he did not want him in England, but there were worse things afoot. The Emperor had an even more violent aversion to such a marriage, and took immediate measures against it. When Pole reached Brussels on his way to England he found himself detained by the Emperor's orders. He suspected the reason, and when Mary's marriage was discussed he remarked mildly that he would have supposed that a woman of her age would prefer to remain single. It was plain enough that he himself intended to do so. His one consuming passion was to bring his erring country back into the fold of the Church and undo the work of the old King. But for months he was not allowed to leave Brussels, for Charles had got an idea of his own.

The Emperor was a weary man grown old in his fifties, and gout was making his life a martyrdom. He recalled with a dim surprise that he had once been betrothed to this Mary of England himself. And now his son Philip, born of his prudent alliance with the wealthy princess of Portugal, was older than he himself had been then. And both of them were widowers.

Blinking in the light of this revelation, his projecting lower lip mumbling the green leaf he kept there to allay its feverishness, the Emperor contemplated the astounding flight of time. Well, Mary was not as young as she had been, either. Ridiculous to think of her now as that grave, pale child with silver-fair hair showing at the edge of a black velvet cap, whom his aunt Catherine had been holding by the hand on the steps of Greenwich Palace as he rode up, that summer day in 1522. Was it possible that she, too, remembered her childhood betrothal to himself? Was it possible that Mary might entertain embarrassing ambitions, now that his Isabella was fifteen years in her grave?

The Emperor scowled, and hitched his fur robe closer. He was too tired. He was too old. But what more logical, what more diplomatically neat and fitting, than that Philip should now fulfil that old contract of his father's with the throne of England? Henry II had got Mary Stuart for the Dauphin. Well, then, Philip should have Mary Tudor. It was the better match, too; the greatest match in Europe. He would live to see the schemes of his old enemy Francis defeated yet—and then he could die.

His next letter to Mary mentioned that whereas his own infirmities barred him from the honour of competing for her hand, he could offer her instead the person nearest his heart, his only son, Prince Philip of Spain. He condoled with her on Pole's unambitious temperament, and made tactful reference to Courtenay's unfortunate behaviour—and implied that after all a foreign alliance might do more to strengthen her reign than marriage with an English nobleman. He begged her not to be overborne by his authority, but to answer him on this matter without fear or hesitation.

It was just the right mixture of delicate suggestion and an amiable willingness to withdraw upon the slightest rebuff. Mary sent for Renard in a flutter.

The ambassador knew her well by now. He did not press the issue at first. He admitted readily that Philip was indeed no older than Courtenay—and then hazarded the diffident opinion that perhaps marriage and widowerhood ripened a man early. He suggested that in the event of children born of the marriage, Philip's youth might preclude the necessity for another long minority, which was always bad for a country. He reminded her that Philip was already the father of an eight-year-old boy by his dead wife, and skirted the fact that the Prince of Spain had also—it was embarrassing—somewhat numerous illegitimate offspring.

Renard noticed that Mary's dull red flush was mounting. She remarked that she had never been in love—that Philip was still only a boy—she dreaded that she might not be—*enough*. . . . She broke off, smiling and blushing. She wondered if he would be content to live in England—she could never let him govern, of course—nor fill London with Spanish place-seekers—she had heard that he was inferior to his father in some ways—he had been a sad dog in his early youth, had he not?—no?—well, she was too old for

passion—she had had no experience—he was said to be proud and haughty—if only she could see him—speak to him. . . .

Renard perceived that the idea of taking her second cousin as a consort had already begun to exercise a growing fascination. Her devotion to her mother's memory contributed—Philip's grandmother was Catherine of Aragon's sister. The Emperor was lost to her with the years. Reginald Pole had no desire for kingship. Courtenay was a fool. But Philip . . . And it would be a sort of link with the Emperor after all; a link with Spain, where her mother came from. It somehow made the prospect of her sacrificial marriage a little less terrifying.

Philip had to be approached next. By inclination and upbringing he was all Spaniard. Since his wife's death in 1545 he was living peaceably in some sort of morganatic union with a titled Spanish lady who had borne him a family, while negotiations were under way for a marriage between him and a Portuguese princess who was his first cousin. The English marriage would mean for him an uprooting both inconvenient and distasteful. But he was a true son of the Emperor, and he had grown up oppressed with the tremendous gravity of his royal destiny. He had never known a reckless impulse in his life, and his sense of duty was inordinate. He had not seen the Emperor for two years; he wrote a solemn filial letter, submitting to whatever marriage seemed best to his father—though he confessed parenthetically that he would have preferred a younger wife than Mary of England.

Meanwhile on the last day of September the loyal crowds packed the roadsides for Mary's coronation procession from the Tower to Whitehall, where she was to spend the night before the ceremony; and despite apprehensions of the foreign marriage their acclaim was hearty and sincere. The girlhood misfortunes of the triumphant Queen appealed to the popular sympathies. She was of truly royal descent, and had lived among them all her life, showing courage and steadfast chastity through all her trials. She was the Queen, and for the moment she could do no wrong.

Mary rode in an open litter, clad in splendid blue velvet, with a jewelled diadem so heavy that its weight on the usual headache—she was having one of her bad days—was sheer agony, so that for part of the way she tried to ease the blind pain by resting her head on her hand.

The streets through which she passed were hung with flags and streamers, and there were frequent halts for the necessary speech-making and pageants prepared for her honour and amusement. Mary's responses were automatic and mostly unsmiling. She wanted only to get to bed; and the thought of the endless ritual which must take place in the Abbey next day hung over her, fatigue piled on fatigue. A brisk autumn wind set the neuralgic pains in her teeth to jumping, and whipped the bright decorations askew, so that behind the wreaths and banners and bunting the bare, gaping ruins of rifled monasteries and churches stared out at her—her father's work.

Central London was now an architectural shambles—for when Henry had finished with his plundering, the ecclesiastic paving stones and crumbling walls were sold as rubbish and carried off in ninepence cartloads by the humbler citizens. A carpenter's shop now inhabited the site of the Franciscan shrine where she had worshipped with her mother as a child—the Church of the Knights Hospitallers lay open to the sky after being blown up with gunpowder in the excesses of Henry's wanton destruction of all that symbolized England's one-time connection with Rome.

Mary's heavy eyes rested sadly on these hideous monuments to her mother's degradation. They should all be rebuilt—they should all rise again, phoenix-like, from their own ruins—to the last penny of the royal treasury, now that the power was hers, Rome should be rebuilt in London. . . .

From mid-afternoon till the early twilight closed in on torches that guttered and died in the gusts of that sportive wind, the procession wound slowly westward through the cheering, exultant crowds while Mary sat thoughtful, mechanically gracious, stoically enduring pain and cramp, longing for bed, and a hot draught, and rest.

Immediately behind the Queen's litter came the chariot which carried Elizabeth, heir presumptive, wearing cloth of silver made in the French fashion with great sleeves ; and facing her sat the almost forgotten Anne of Cleves, who had emerged from her wealthy retirement smiling broad good will. There was a rumour that her strange friendship with Mary had brought about her conversion to the Catholic faith a year or so ago.

Elizabeth took it all in with bright, attentive eyes which missed nothing. She had never seen a coronation procession before—but she hoped by the grace of God to witness still one more. She was interested in seeing how it was done.

At eleven o'clock the next morning the Queen left Whitehall for the Abbey, and the long, ancient business of the crowning began. Mary had not slept off her headache, and looked drawn and old even in the dim, kind light of the cathedral. Her crimson robes bore her down, her train seemed longer than she was tall, her movements were dull and sluggish, and her harsh voice on the coronation oaths held no beauty and no emotion.

Elizabeth, installed in a prominent place among the spectators as was her jealous right, watched and marvelled at Mary's lack of grace, of exaltation. Some day. . . . Her chin lifted slightly to an imaginary diadem, her slim fingers curled to a phantom sceptre, her shoulders straightened to the dragging weight of an invisible miniver mantle. When her turn came how different it would be from this dead-and-alive performance of Mary's. . . .

Veni, Creator Spiritus—Mentes tuorum visita. . . . The choir and organ swelled to the mighty music, and Elizabeth drew in her breath sharply at beauty which was sheer pain. Did the unfeeling creature down on the altar steps not realize what was happening ? She was being consecrated Queen of England . . . anointed and blessed. . . .

Now Mary retired to her traverse with her women—an endless wait—why was she, how could she be so slow?—to return in white taffeta with a purple mantle. Elizabeth leaned forward, unconscious of Noailles's sardonic eyes upon her, watching absorbedly while Mary received the sandals and the spurs, and the jewelled girdle of the sword was passed over her shoulder and under her left arm; while the three crowns were set on her head in turn, with a blare of trumpets between—the ring, next, on her wedding finger—then the orb—and last of all, the sceptre; while she was conducted to the great gilded chair where all the rulers of England since Edward II had sat for the singing of this great first *Te Deum* of their reign.

Could nothing move Mary that day? There she sat like an effigy, enthroned, complete, eclipsed in her own grandeur, wedded bride of England—the sceptre in her listless right hand, her left wrist sagging with the weight of the orb. Then came the bishops, ten of them and Gardiner, in mitres and copes of cloth of gold, kneeling one by one before her to do homage and kiss her cheek, on the rolling sentences of the bishops' oath—“*I shall be faithful and true, and faith and truth bear to you, our sovereign Lady and Queen, and to your heirs, Kings and Queens of England, France, and Ireland, and I shall do and truly acknowledge the service of the lands which I claim to hold of you, as in the right of your Church.* . . .”

Elizabeth flushed and thrilled and looked on hungrily, stirred to her princely soul by the flowing, musical vows which she heard now for the first time—which one day she would hear again, please God. . . . Then came the great temporal lords, led by the venerable Duke of Norfolk, kneeling one by one before the Queen, their hands between her hands—“*I become your liege man of life and limb, and of all earthly worship and faith, and all truly shall bear unto you, to live and die with you against all manner of folk; God help me and All-hallows.*” And then, as with one voice ringing to the high grey vaults of stone—“*God save Queen Mary!*” At that Elizabeth's suspended breath came again on something like a sob—and the solemn droning of the Mass began. *In nomine Patris et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti* . . . on, on, infinitely on, to the soaring, organ-borne anthem—*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccati mundi, Miserere nobis.* . . .

It was over. Elizabeth got to her feet with the others. She was trembling, and her eyes were blind with tears.

XI

Even Mary's ladies talked of nothing now but her marriage, and she saw the necessity for making up her mind very soon. Noailles was brewing trouble in the city with talk of the evils of any foreign marriage, and the arrogance of all Spaniards in particular. Even Gardiner was against her secret inclinations, and said that Philip had already alienated his own Flemish subjects by his high and mighty ways, and that the English would never stand for him. The Council was full of confusion and cross purposes. She received

formal protests, and insulting anonymous tracts and lampoons were left surreptitiously in her private rooms. The lords were quarrelling among themselves and withdrawing to their country houses to sulk.

Urged to marry by the same Parliament which in the next breath implored her not to marry Philip, Mary's long spinsterhood was in a maidenly panic. She reiterated hopelessly that she was thirty-seven and knew nothing of love—openly admitted that she could not sleep at night for virgin qualms. Everybody they offered her was too young, too lusty, too—*male*. She sighed for the Emperor, whom she remembered as a slight, fair-haired young man stooping courteously to her six-year-old speeches ; or for Reginald Pole, that settled, quiet, monkish gentleman with whom she had common memories of the tragic Queen they had both loved. But neither of those two wanted her now. She suspected from his impersonal silence toward herself that Philip did not want her either. And as for Courtenay . . .

She felt that there was no one she could trust or confide in ; she sent for Renard secretly, to beg for reassurance and further details concerning the Prince of Spain. She received him nervously, and he saw that her eyes were red with weeping. The Emperor had warned him not to oppose Courtenay's suit, knowing that the Earl would hang himself in his own rope if they waited long enough ; and this had very nearly happened. But she spoke now of having had an interview with—Edward ; she hesitated self-consciously over the name, which she had learned to use in those long night talks with his mother. He had come to protest against the persistent rumours of his proposed marriage with Elizabeth, asserting that she was much too proud for his taste, and of doubtful legitimacy, and a heretic besides. He begged the Queen to name him a bride of less degree, and assured her at the same time of his undying devotion to herself. In short, Courtenay said at last all the things she liked to hear, while his mother, her dear friend, sat by and smiled approval.

So Courtenay had begun to mend his ways. Mary, always forgiving, thought that perhaps a nice foreign marriage with a bride of wealth and youth and beauty—she wanted Courtenay to have the best, still. Renard agreed, and suggested that a slight increase of rank—a dukedom, perhaps?—might raise his value in the Continental marriage market. . . .

Gradually by devious topics they came back to Philip.

Mary's near-sighted eyes filled again. She caught at Renard's hands in her earnestness. It was so important that she should see Philip first—speak with him—privately—before the marriage contract was signed. Renard was dismayed at this unconventional and inconvenient insistence upon an interview with a future husband. It was quite impossible that his Prince should come to England and risk a jilting. But that was not what Mary had in mind. How was she to explain to this cold-eyed lawyer that she dreaded to face a bridegroom—that she well knew her lack of beauty and of any compensating charm—and that she longed for a chance

to read her fiance's face at some preliminary meeting, in the hope of gauging his disappointment at his first sight of her. She was haunted, with each apprehensive glance into her mirror, by her father's cruel reception of Anne of Cleves because she was not beautiful. She knew so little of men, really. Suppose . . .

Renard, still pretending nervousness on Philip's behalf, procured a portrait of him by Titian from Philip's aunt, who wrote anxiously that the Queen would please remember that it was three years old, and looked better from a little distance, and that since it was painted he had grown more beard.

Mary peered at it feverishly—a youngish, grave man with thin, curly fair hair and the heavy Hapsburg mouth. And from that day onward, between doubt and desire, she knew no peace.

Parliament provided the necessary opposition to rouse her inherent obstinacy. Once more she sent for Renard, mysteriously, late at night. Once more she had been weeping, and she was in the grip of her usual autumn illness besides, and looked old and wretched. She announced at once that she had spent the last two days and nights in prayer, and that she had come to a decision. And thereupon, in her chamber, with only Renard and one silent waiting-woman to witness, she knelt before the Blessed Sacrament, repeated the *Veni, Creator Spiritus*, and took her oath before God to marry no one but Philip while she lived.

Such headlong procedure took Renard's breath clean away. But Mary had fallen in love with a picture, and was determined to possess the original at any cost. And thus was her second promise to her people broken.

The French influence worked desperately against the Spanish alliance. Terrible stories of the Inquisition were spread, as an awful warning of what English Protestants might expect if a Spanish prince came to their throne. Catholic services in the city were broken up by riots, in which priests and spectators were injured. London was in turmoil, and each day Mary's Catholic tendencies became more unmistakable.

Gardiner, unaware of the weird midnight scene in Mary's apartments, still urged marriage with an Englishman, or with anyone but Philip, pointing out how Spain was Philip's home, and how if Mary died childless Philip would rule England—but by proxy and from afar. He warned Mary that if she did not marry Courtenay Elizabeth would, thus forming a strong party to secure the succession to their heirs. And if they became impatient, and strong enough, he added, they might not even wait for heirs; so that Elizabeth might be safest after all in the Tower. . . .

In September Elizabeth had submitted unwillingly and gracelessly to the Catholic service, for she felt her position too insecure to hold out longer against Mary's religious pressure. She feared banishment from Court too soon for her own good, before she had made her mark there, learnt her friends, made sure of her enemies. And she had been determined to witness the coronation, in her rightful place as heir presumptive. By the end of the year, however,

all she wanted was to get away into the country, and then Mary would not let her go.

Everyone who was against the Queen used Elizabeth's name, and everyone who was Elizabeth's partisan used it too—so that her peril was as great from her friends as from her enemies. The more cautious people in the Queen's favour began to shun her sister, though some of the younger men and women still rallied to Elizabeth loyally. At first her bearing under the gathering storm-clouds was so gallant and undismayed that it passed for bravado. And when she became really frightened and begged again to be allowed to retire to Hatfield, Renard said it was only to be freer for further plotting against the Queen, and advised the Tower instead, since she desired a change of residence. The Emperor was advocating a foreign marriage, to get her out of the country before Philip should come into it. It was suggested that Philip's personal friend, the exiled Duke of Savoy, would undertake to marry Elizabeth and carry her off to the Continent, out of the way.

Elizabeth perceived now that the Noailles-Courtenay conspirators took no thought of her own safety or compliance in their plots, and that they would not hesitate to implicate her in their treason without her consent. She was sure that the only thing to do was to get away as far as possible from the scene of action, in the hope that she might not be drawn into it. She had long since taken Courtenay's measure and knew him for a weakling and a fool. Noailles, underestimating her prudence and experience, had begun to presume. Gardiner looked destruction. Mary's suspicions sat heavily on every meeting between the sisters. Elizabeth longed to get away.

Finally she received permission to go to Ashridge for Christmas, knowing there would be spies set in her household. At the same time Henry II offered her a refuge in France, which she declined. Mary Stuart was her nearest rival in the succession—she doubted Henry's motives. No, she must sit tight at Ashridge with a clear conscience, and see the thing out.

When the time came for Mary to say good-bye to the only near relative that was left to her, and Elizabeth stood before her with reproachful eyes, Mary became conscious again of that vibrant charm which she had loved and hated ever since Anne Boleyn's daughter had been a baby in her household. And she found herself wishing too late that things might have been otherwise.

She had prepared a sisterly gift for Elizabeth at parting—a sable hood against the winter cold, and a double row of the pearls which Elizabeth so loved above every other jewel. The small thoughtfulness of the choice brought an ache to Elizabeth's throat. Mary was good—Mary wanted to be kind—she and Mary might be friends, if only they were let alone—Mary did not really wish her any harm. She felt a warm rush of pity for the ageing, lonely woman, surrounded by intrigue and falsehood, wilfully cutting herself off from perhaps the only person in the world who had any real feeling for her, hedging herself about with mistrust and bitterness. Poor Mary.

And this marriage would not help. . . . She dropped to her knees before the Queen.

"Your Majesty—" The words caught on the tightness in her throat and sounded queer. "Sister—can you not trust me more? They try to come between us for their own ends. But promise you will never believe ill of me on hearsay only—promise you will always of your mercy let me speak, when I am accused—remember how we have lived so long like sisters—"

"See then that you still behave like one," said Mary with a grudging smile, but Elizabeth swept on earnestly.

"Need we be undone by lies and treachery—need you believe every evil report they bring you of one who is your most loving subject? Beseech you, sister, never be angry with me till you have heard true from my own lips!"

Mary was moved. She drew a ring from her finger, and placed it on Elizabeth's slim one, where it hung too loose. With a graceful gesture of submission Elizabeth caught up their two hands together and kissed the ring.

"If ever I am angry with you," said Mary hoarsely, "there is my token to remind you—and me, too, if need be—that I try to trust you."

And so they kissed like sisters, and parted.

XII

Philip, a laggard bridegroom playing nervously for time, had been expected in England before Christmas; but the winter weeks dragged on and it was January when his ambassador Egmont and suite arrived to draw up the marriage contract.

The magnificent embassy was on such a grand scale that during its passage through Kent it was mistaken for the retinue of Philip himself, and caused something near to open insurrection. On the first of January the servants and luggage made a solemn procession through the snowy streets of London to Durham House in the Strand, which had been appointed for Egmont's use. The populace was sullen and suspicious, and either muttered unpleasantly or affected not to notice the impressive spectacle at all. Some boys threw dirty snowballs and jeered the Spaniards, whose behaviour became anything but conciliatory. It was not a good beginning.

The next day eighty elegantly clad gentlemen headed by the resplendent young Count Egmont made a ceremonious entry; Lord William Howard and Edward Courtenay were among their glittering English escort. Egmont proceeded at once to Whitehall and made his speech to the Queen. Mary had one of her attacks of maiden modesty, cast down her eyes upon her coronation ring, reminded him that her realm was her first husband, declined to discuss in public so delicate a matter as her own marriage—and referred him to her ministers regarding the details of the treaty.

Egmont was famous for his good looks and his charm, but

unexpected as these ingratiating ways were in a Spaniard they had small effect on the Council of England. He laboured in vain to modify the drastic terms of a marriage contract which left the bridegroom almost nothing but an empty title and the faint hope of an heir. Mary's ministers did not want the marriage, at best. They were prepared to consent to it on their own terms, but not otherwise. However, the ambassador's disarming manners dissolved some personal objections to a foreign invasion by marriage, and raised some hopes concerning his master; there was a good deal of banqueting and music and dancing and sumptuous entertainment, enlivened by broad waggish references to the real object of his visit—the royal wedding.

Mary loved display and court functions. The Spanish embassy brought life and colour and a sort of feverish gaiety to Whitehall which sent a pleasant thrill through her days. Already she felt the excitement of her coming bridal. She watched the foreigners closely, trying to piece out from their mannerisms and pretty speeches what her Philip would be like. Would Egmont dance at her wedding too? Where should the wedding take place?—Greenwich—Whitehall—Richmond—would Philip like the best? The state bedchamber at Greenwich was perhaps the grandest—at Greenwich Catherine of Aragon had been married to the young King Henry—and there Mary herself had been born—a good omen; perhaps, to receive Philip first at Greenwich—she drifted on the music of a dance, her eyes, short-focused, resting blindly on the bright, rhythmic blur of the moving couples—there would be time to have the bedchamber at Greenwich redecorated for Philip's coming—a new carpet on the floor—some of the best tapestries could be brought from Hampton Court—new crimson curtains to the bed. . . .

"Your Majesty is thoughtful this evening."

She started—turned her head toward the words—her dark flush rose relentlessly to her infinite confusion. The music had stopped. Lord William Howard stood before her, with Renard and some others, come to pay their respects after dining. The same smile sat on all their faces—the knowing indulgence reserved for a woman with a lover. It both flattered and dismayed her.

"I was thinking," she defended herself hastily, with a glance round at the animated, laughing sign-language of her maids and the Spanish visitors, "that it was good to hear my mother's tongue again."

"Ah, yes." Howard leaned nearer, with deference to be sure, but he was still smiling. "And we shall hope soon to see someone seated there—" His hand sketched a presence in the empty chair at her side. "—who will be saying all those things which best banish a woman's melancholy; and in the language, of course, of that great queen, your Majesty's mother!" Genially he turned to Renard and the rest, who stood in a smirking semicircle behind him. "Is that not so, eh? Did you hear, do you know, can you not guess what I have just said? The Queen is homesick for the sound of the Spanish tongue, she says. And I—"

" My lord—!" said Mary, bashful as any country maid. " I beg you not to repeat—how can you say that I—?"

His laughter resounded ; he had dined well ; her thoughts had been plain to see ; he was safely the Queen's senior in years, and had been much at her father's court. And he knew that for all her red embarrassment she was not angry.

" How can I say—!" he echoed uproariously. " Nay, your Majesty likes it well enough ! Come now, be fair—admit to-night would be the merrier for the presence of a Spanish bridegroom ! "

For a moment it looked as though she might be thoroughly cross with him. But she was fair, as a rule. Her guilty conscience won, and blushing still she laughed, unwillingly ; and the Court laughed ; and with the start of a fresh tune the dance went on.

But Egmont was no fool and he sensed undercurrents ; he sent a message to Philip urging haste, both on the Queen's account and because of the growing unrest which seethed outside the complaisant gaieties of the Court. If Philip arrived at once and took possession things might simmer down quite harmlessly under his firm hand. If he delayed too long and the country had time to organize itself against his coming. . . .

Mary sent Philip a message, too, promising him a fletch and an armed personal guard, if only he would come to her at once ; she would be all to him that a wife ought to be, she said ; and he would please bring his own cook to guard against poisoning.

The Council and the Court appeared to have decided to make the best of it, and within a fortnight of Egmont's arrival Gardiner announced the completion of the marriage treaty and the terms of the contract, which were certainly about all any Englishman could require. Mary had broken her promise again to the subjects who had set her on a disputed throne ; she had enforced on them the Catholic religion, and now she was taking a husband whom they did not want. Public feeling was running very high, and began to express itself in more open insult and sedition. The French assisted. It was rumoured in London that Philip would bring an army of mercenaries to rule England—and people added with a snigger that the Prince of Spain was afraid of a wench barely out of her teens, and dared not come to England until Elizabeth was married abroad or locked up at home. A story flew about next that Edward was not really dead, and that Mary was therefore as much of a usurper as Jane had been. It was said on one breath that France would make war on Philip—and on another knowing whisper that France would even make common cause with England to keep him out. The rumblings of civil war in the West and in Kent grew louder.

The persistent Devonshire conspiracy for the marriage of Courtenay and Elizabeth lacked a leader, for the young Earl remained in the Queen's shadow, much too much a coward to head an uprising in his own favour ; and Elizabeth was lying low at Ashridge, and would have nothing to do with it.

Down in Kent there was an idealist named Thomas Wyatt, who

had convinced himself and a growing following that the arrival of Philip would mean the death of Elizabeth as the Protestant heir, and hence the end of England as a nation. Son of a poet, with all the ardour of a crusader, he was foolish enough to believe that he could save Mary from her own folly. He made it clear, however, that he would be content that Mary should go on ruling, if only she did not marry the Spaniard. He asserted that rebellion against the marriage was not treason but patriotism, and dwelt eloquently upon his essential loyalty to Mary herself as his sovereign. It was only Philip against whom Wyatt went to war.

At the end of January he had begun to muster his forces in Kent for an attack on London, and the atmosphere in town grew tense. Mary wrote to Elizabeth, summoning her to Court; the implication was that her younger sister would be safer there than in the country in such troublous times. Elizabeth was wretchedly aware that any conspiracy worth mentioning would involve her name, however hard she might try to dissociate herself from all such projects. She sent back a message to say she was too ill to travel and could see no one. Then she gave orders to look to the defences of Ashridge, such as they were, and went to bed with a headache. If only they would let her alone !

Mary had no time to pursue the argument—if Elizabeth was ill she was at least out of mischief—though Renard wanted her under his eye and urged her immediate arrest. For once, Mary would not listen to him. Word had come that Wyatt was nearing Southwark on his march towards London and the city was in a panic.

The bridges were ordered to be destroyed for miles around and the boats were all secured on the north side of the Thames, so that London became a moated castle. Its streets were full of armed men and excited citizens barricading for the expected attack, for the rumour ran that Wyatt's forces were recruited and held together largely on the promise of plunder when the goal was reached. There was a price on Wyatt's head. Mary's lords rallied to her from the country north of London, with their armed retainers. It was like July all over again, but in the dead of winter, and the roads were clogged with melting snow and mud.

The imperial ambassadors disguised themselves as merchants and escaped down the River to some Flemish vessels ; all but Renard, who had learned that Mary could win. And meanwhile, without trustworthy guards or money to pay them with, knowing the citizenry sullen and half minded to join Wyatt in his protest against her choice of a husband, Mary calmly gathered about her the lords she could depend on and prepared to stand her ground.

As usual when roused to action, she knew no personal fear. On the first of February she rode through the streets from Whitehall to the Guildhall, crowned and sceptred, and attended by her ladies-in-waiting, a magnificent display of self-possession and regal pomp. There the great hall became for the time her throne-room, and she made a speech to the Mayor and officials of London, while as many

of the populace as could crowd in choked all the available space to hear her.

A small, haggard woman, wearing all the panoply of royalty, erect and undaunted in her heavy robes, her voice amazingly strong and vital, she swept on through her spontaneous appeal to their wavering loyalty—

“And this I say to you on the word of a prince. I cannot tell how naturally a mother loves her children, for I was never the mother of any; but certainly a prince and governor may as naturally and earnestly love subjects as the mother loves her children; then assure yourselves that I, being your sovereign lady and Queen, do as earnestly love and favour you. And I, thus loving you, cannot but think that ye as heartily and faithfully love me in return. And so joining together in this knot of love and concord, I doubt not but that we together shall give these rebels a speedy overthrow.”

We. It was the true Tudor touch. She loved them. They must therefore love her. She was their mother, and their Queen. And against such a union rebellion was futile and ridiculous.

They pressed closer to her, murmuring their approval. The facile emotions of the mob were stirred. They loved her. She said so.

“And as concerning my intended marriage; I am neither so desirous of wedding, nor so precisely wedded to my will that I needs must have a husband. Hitherto I have lived a virgin, and I doubt not with God’s grace I could live so still. On the word of a Queen I promise you that if the marriage appear not before the high court of Parliament, nobility, and commons, for the singular benefit of the whole realm, then will I abstain not only from this marriage but from every other while I live. And now, good subjects, pluck up your hearts and like true men stand to your lawful sovereign against these rebels, and fear them not—for I do not, I assure you !”

It was rather magnificent. London rose to it. They cheered her to the echo in the hall, and the crowds outside beyond the reach of her voice caught it up, till the streets rang with lusty shouts of “Long live Queen Mary!” which followed her back to the palace. Fears and dissatisfactions had vanished before the magic presence of King Henry’s daughter, who was not afraid. Before the day was out her forces were strengthened by nearly twenty thousand volunteers. And as usual she had made a promise she did not mean to keep, for she considered herself as truly the wife of Philip now as though he stood already by her side.

So when Wyatt’s riotous army reached Southwark they found London Bridge cut down by the defenders, and the Tower ordnance all trained on the southern bank. They could not know that Mary had decreed against firing it, for fear of destroying homes and helpless citizens. Wyatt hung about there for two days, hoping London itself might declare for him; and well it might have done, but for Mary’s personal entreaty. Meanwhile the confidence and zeal of his men oozed away in brawling, havoc, and desertion, which he tried in vain to check. On the third day he marched up the south

bank to Kingston, where he was able to repair the hastily overthrown bridge and make a crossing with his army, now dwindled to about fifteen thousand.

The weather was particularly horrible for early February. His provisions were running short, and he had no money to supply the immediate needs of his men. Still, they had met with no active opposition from London so far, and he was able to convince himself and others that the sympathies of the common people were with him. Moreover, he had a shrewd guess that food might be running equally short in town.

Midnight of February sixth found him bringing the last of his heavy artillery across the improvised bridge at Kingston. His men were cold and tired and wet and hungry ; but the road to London lay open before them, knee-deep in mud. He stood an excellent chance of taking the city by surprise before daylight. Hampered by his unwieldy cannon-pieces on the dreadful roads, he pushed on.

At Brentford a wheel broke down, and the whole army stopped for the repair of a single gun-carriage by the light of torches which guttered and died in the drizzling rain. The more experienced officers chafed, and implored Wyatt to leave the piece behind and make the most of the darkness on the march to London. Mary would surely have scouts about, they argued. At any moment the invasion might be discovered, and the city would be ready for them. An hour's time now was worth a dozen cannon later on, they told him.

But Wyatt's obstinacy would not yield to the advice of longer heads than his. He did not even care that he would be long overdue for the arrangements of certain friends within the city who had promised him free passage and had already begun to doubt while his army rioted at Southwark. He was sure they would be just as glad to see him when he did arrive. He did not care that wiser men than he were nearly crazy with the delay, or that more and more of his men were slinking away in the confusion, prudently deserting in time an expedition which they now felt was doomed to failure. The cannon must be repaired. His army stood cursing and shivering in the cold rain, with nothing to do but wonder about breakfast.

Mary's scout system left much to be desired. She received no warning of Wyatt's movements until two o'clock that morning, when Whitehall was startled nervously awake by the arrival of a soaked and exhausted horseman from the rebel's own ranks ; a deserter, hoping to procure the Queen's personal pardon by betraying the approach of his recent comrades. He said that Wyatt would be at Hyde Park in two hours, and that they counted on treason within the city to open its gates to them.

Very soon the whole palace was awake and in an uproar, with the rattle of armour and the tramp of soldiers and the squeaks and cries of excited women. Mary huddled on a fur-lined robe and met her hastily clad Council, which wrangled blinking in the candle-light. Gardiner implored her on his knees to retire at once to the

Tower where she might withstand a siege—a boat had been got ready to convey her ; or to Windsor ; or even to Calais, English territory and only one step from the Emperor's protection. Mary replied that her Chancellor might run for the Tower if he liked, but she would stay at Whitehall.

Terror reigned among her maids, especially those who had been recruited since the warlike days of her first entry into London, and were unused to alarms and to soldiers at close quarters. They ran shrieking to and fro, slamming doors, trying to pray, clutching futile garments against the cold and the eyes of the armed guards who were moving briskly to their posts in all the most intimate parts of the building, even to the Queen's bedchamber. Barricades went up, and messengers flew back and forth between the martial palace and the headquarters of the lords she relied on to defend the city at other points.

By four o'clock on that black winter morning the drums were beating the call to arms through the empty streets, and soon citizen defenders and regular troops were mustering round the sister palaces of St. James's and Whitehall. Wyatt did not know which of these was occupied by the Queen and her household, and she intended that his uncertainty should continue. Both were defended. The scrape and clang of weapons and the bawled commands made an eerie din in the uncourageous hours just before dawn. Women woke and screamed that they would be murdered in their beds, and children wailed for their elders' fright. Non-combatants huddled into cellars and attics, waiting for the reassuring light of day.

Ash Wednesday dawned grimly with a pouring rain. Mary, on her knees in prayer, remembered with a new pang that she had once thought to be safely married before now. What would Philip think, if she could not order her kingdom better than this ? It was humiliating—he would not respect her—perhaps he would not come. . . . She went on praying. She had done all she could. The rest was in the hands of God and her soldiers.

Whitehall lay with its gardens sloping to the river across an open park from St. James's Palace, beyond which stretched the soggy fields and dripping oaks of the royal hunting-grounds joining the manor of Hyde Park. Neither house had any defence but its stout gates and men-at-arms. Mary's generals disposed her forces all the way from Charing Cross to St. James's Hill. Lord Clinton took a detachment of men and cannon up the Hill opposite the Palace gates and into a lane which branched off for Hyde Park Corner. Lord William Howard was in charge at Ludgate, leading to the City itself and the Tower. Sir John Gage commanded the Queen's guards midway at Charing Cross, and among the gentlemen officering under him was Courtenay, who had at first declared that he would take orders from nobody, and who was soon blue with funk and cold.

The delay over the broken wheel had to pass for a rest with Wyatt's bedraggled crew. They arrived at Hyde Park about nine,

instead of at dawn, as they might have done, and surged on toward St. James's. At the top of the Hill Wyatt made one of his gallant crusader's gestures. He seized a standard and led the charge, shouting that strangely inconsistent battle-cry for a rebellious subject : " God save the Queen ! A Wyatt ! A Wyatt ! God save the Queen ! "

His men rallied wearily and pelted after him with a faint cheer on the echo of his shout. Clinton let them come, until about five hundred of them had passed the intersection where he waited. Then he cut the straggling line in two and set upon the tail of it, dispersing the survivors without a leader.

Wyatt hurried on, ignoring the fighting in his rear. His one idea now had become to join hands with his supposed friends in the City. As he passed the Palace he wondered where Mary was—and hoped that she was watching from some window in St. James's while his men streamed under its very walls. At Charing Cross the remnant charged so briskly that Courtenay took to his heels and started a general rout in full flight for the gates of Whitehall, shrieking defeat and utter panic.

There they met a lost detachment of Wyatt's men looking for their captain. There was a scrimmage under the Holbein Gateway to Whitehall, which Mary witnessed from a window within arrow shot, and she saw her gentlemen defenders scamper to cover under fire. They came to tell her she was beaten at Charing Cross, and she called them cowards and offered to go down to the courtyard and die there with those who were willing to fight for her. Her maids wept and wrung their hands in the background and begged her to flee down the River and save herself—and them. But Mary stood firm, a febrile spot on each high cheekbone, her knotty hands shaking with excitement, her harsh voice roaring defiance and contempt. As usual her own dynamic courage had its effect, and her men rallied to a new shout of " Down with the drabble-tails ! "

If the rebel band had followed up their first advantage, or if Wyatt had given chase to Courtenay instead of pigheadedly ploughing ahead for Ludgate and his problematical supporters there, they might have had Mary at their mercy. But in the next counter-attack from the Palace, its defenders barely distinguishable from the said drabble-tails in the mud, the invading contingent allowed themselves to be beaten off, and straggled on without a head, toward the appointed meeting-place in the City.

Meanwhile Wyatt had reached his goal and found Lord William Howard in possession of the gate. The seditious element upon which he relied was somewhere in the rear of Howard's little army, keeping very quiet. Bewildered and deserted and exhausted, Wyatt fell back toward Temple Bar with about eighty men, all that were left to him after the Charing Cross fracas. There Pembroke and his force blocked the way. Wherever Wyatt turned now, fresh royalist troops had got there ahead of him. His boy's game of crusade was over. Soon after noon he threw away the stump of a

broken sword and allowed himself to be taken an ignominious prisoner.

Once more, the throne was Mary's.

That night Renard and the Queen sat together in the candlelight debating consequences. She did not know whom to trust or where to turn, and she listened to Renard dully, the thrill of victory lost in the awful responsibility of reprisal. This sort of thing could not go on. She had been generous in July, she had spared lives right and left that were distinctly forfeit to the Crown, and she had acted against Renard's advice in doing so. Northumberland of course had paid in full, but Suffolk she had let go free, and how had he thanked her? By seizing this first opportunity to raise a futile army of his own in the Midlands while Wyatt brewed the trouble in Kent; he had been caught redhanded and was now in the Tower with the Kentish rebels. What was to be done with him?

What was to be done with Jane, whose death-warrant Mary had so far delayed signing—poor Jane who had no part in this last disturbance, it was true, but apparently so long as Jane lived there would have to be disturbances. She fought Renard for Jane, still ; refused to give him the promise he wanted, that Jane should die with her father, and Guildford too. An end of the ambitious Greys, said Renard. But Mary shook her head, remembering how small Jane was, how meek, and unaspiring. It was never Jane's own wish to be Queen, objected Mary. But Jane was a rival, the ambassador insisted. Jane was a faction ; a figure-head ; a rallying point. Jane's mere existence meant trouble to come. Mary shook her head.

Then there was Courtenay. She had been kind to him—and he seemed to have conspired against her in the shadow of her very skirts. Renard had stopped at nothing to secure evidence of that. A packet of dispatches from Noailles to the French king had been rifled, and in it were found cypher messages which spoke confidently of the compliance of Elizabeth and Courtenay in the plots, and of their marriage and succession as soon as Mary could be deposed. . . .

Yes, and what about Elizabeth? She had been kind to Elizabeth too—once—long enough, perhaps. In that same pilfered dispatch case of the French ambassador's was a copy of the last letter from Elizabeth to Mary—it appeared that the Queen's sister kept the French king abreast of her most private correspondence. Still, said Mary, it was only a copy, not in Elizabeth's handwriting. Renard jeered at her, diplomatically, for hesitating. Had not two messages from Wyatt to Elizabeth at Ashridge been intercepted by Mary's own spies? Did not that indicate that Elizabeth was abetting the rebellion? Elizabeth or Jane—either one would do for the Protestant design. Elizabeth and Jane—and Elizabeth the guiltier of the two. Jane and Guildford—Courtenay and Elizabeth—Philip and Mary—which would rule, inquired Renard craftily, and saw the Queen's dark flush creep up across her sallow cheeks. Philip and Mary. . . .

She had been so kind to them all, had tried so hard to let them all live, and yet these things went on happening. Apparently it would not do to be kind to people. Kindness did not buy loyalty.

Mercy bred no gratitude. Very well, Suffolk should die this time. Jane and Guildford too. Wyatt must have some sort of trial, but it need not take long—the verdict was inevitable. Kent should pay in blood and tears for its uprising. The London deserters would find no quarter. Renard thought she had shilly-shallied before, did he. Well, now he should see her act.

So London and Rochester and Maidstone reeked with hanging corpses for weeks. Lady Jane and Guildford were executed only a few days before Suffolk received the death sentence. Courtenay was sent back to the Tower while the straw was still red on Jane's scaffold, and no one expected he would ever leave it alive. He had had less than eight months of riotous freedom. The Wyatt inquisition began, with the threat of the rack always in the air, if confessions did not come fast enough.

But still Renard was not satisfied. He wanted Elizabeth too.

XIII

Elizabeth had kept track of things as well as she could, from her bed at Ashridge, where that only half-pretended illness had begun to develop alarming symptoms of its own. It may have been sheer nerves and inactivity ; it may have been bad food ; it may even have been the first thing everybody thought of when anybody had unaccountable symptoms—poison. Elizabeth herself did not know. She trusted her household, she was a temperate feeder, with less appetite than usual in this more or less self-imposed confinement. But she was ill.

As rumours drifted in of Wyatt's march from Kent on London, she felt herself becoming more and more incriminated in the plot from which she had made every effort to keep aloof—and when a messenger actually arrived with a letter from him she could only refuse (in something close to panic) to see the man or to receive the paper which he brought. If Wyatt was going to treat her as a fellow conspirator and send her confidential reports of the progress of his enterprise, he would make her seem a party to his schemes. She had nothing to do with his treason—wanted nothing to do with it. And if he failed, he endangered her life along with his own. She dared not write to ask him to let her alone. To commit one word to paper in his keeping would only add to her peril, by forming a tangible link. In reply to the verbal message sent her by the go-between who cooled his heels in her kitchen, advising her further removal from the vicinity of London while the blow was struck, she sent a verbal message back that she was sick in her bed, could see no one, and had no concern in these affairs.

She was not surprised when the whole thing ended in debacle, except for the shock of finding her worst fears more than realized. Heaven only knew what confessions and inventions might be extorted from Wyatt and his associates now by the fear of death and torture. But still she hardly anticipated the excessive revelations

which he poured out to the inquisitors in his first anguish of terror and despair.

He freely admitted that he had communicated with her, and did not add that it was without her consent, which fact he had long since lost sight of if ever it had penetrated to his consciousness. At the same time that his babblings piled up seeming evidence against her, there was that matter of her letter in Noailles's dispatch-case ; a copy obtained by Noailles through a bribed servant of hers, but no one could prove that now. Proof did not much matter, so long as mere evidence existed.

At ten o'clock on the night of the tenth of February there was a pounding on the doors of Ashridge House. Elizabeth was in bed, listlessly trying to read herself to sleep, and Mrs. Ashley sat near, sewing by the light of the same candles. For a moment they stared at each other apprehensively. Then Mrs. Ashley ran to the window which overlooked the front of the house. A high white moon picked out scattered highlights on bright metal—the chink of armour and the clumping of horses' feet came up to her. The place was surrounded by soldiers.

The banging on the outer doors went on until a sleepy servant had scuttled up from below stairs to attend to it. Now there was silence.

Sitting up in bed, white-faced and thin, a great red plait hanging over each shoulder, Elizabeth motioned wordlessly toward the corridor outside her room. Mrs. Ashley tiptoed cautiously to set the door ajar and listened. A man's voice was loud in the hall below : " Let me pass, I say—in the Queen's name ! "

There was a small gasp from the bed, half-moan. Without a glance behind her, all her feathers bristling in defence of her one chick, Mrs. Ashley swept out to the head of the stairs. Lord William Howard was ascending, his spurs clanking as he came, and a little group of servants and men-at-arms stood below. Three or four other gentlemen detached themselves from the shadows round the entrance and closed in behind him.

Mrs. Ashley planted herself on the top step.

" My lord—what means this uncivil intrusion in the middle of the night ? " she demanded.

" I come from the Queen—with a message to her Grace the Lady Elizabeth," he answered somewhat grimly.

" Her Grace is sick in her bed—and cannot see you."

" I fear her Grace has no choice."

He had reached the last step but one, and Mrs. Ashley still barred the way.

" In the morning," she said firmly.

" Now," corrected Howard, not unpleasantly.

She caught at his sleeve.

" Surely out of courtesy your lordships will not invade her Grace's bedchamber at this hour—she will see your lordships in the morning, if she is well enough——"

" She goes to London with us in the morning. I have a letter

from the Queen which cannot wait." He forced his way past her, and strode down the corridor toward where a line of light across the floor of the passage showed Elizabeth's door ajar.

"My lord, this is preposterous!" Mrs. Ashley rustled indignantly at his elbow. "I cannot allow you to enter her Grace's chamber without—"

"Tush, woman, a wench can see her own uncle, even if she is gone to bed!"

Mrs. Ashley made a sudden rush for that half-open door, and he was after her in time to set his foot in the crack. Both had lost dignity in the scuffle. She was panting, as she gazed up at him and wrung her hands.

"I entreat your lordship to show her some consideration—not all these others are to enter, too——!"

"Have you forgotten Dr. Wendy, madam? And Dr. Owen, the Queen's physician? If her Grace is truly ill she will welcome their services." He pushed open the door and entered Elizabeth's room.

Her Grace regarded him defiantly from the middle of the bed, a white velvet wrap huddled round her shoulders. Her pale face was childish in the soft light, between the two engaging plaits of hair. She looked ill, indeed, and to his hard soldier's eye very young and harmless too.

"Well, lass," he began less loudly. "They say you are ill, and faith, I begin to believe it! I'm sorry—ay, more than sorry to see you in such a state as this!"

"And I am not glad to see you here this time of night, my lord," she answered with spirit.

He grinned down at her. Old Harry's daughter, to the bone.

"Your Grace's pardon," he conceded with a jesting bow. "I am come on the Queen's urgent business—with a letter from her Majesty." He presented it ceremoniously.

There was silence in the shadowy room while she read it, sitting up in bed with the candlelight shining golden through the loosened tendrils of her hair—a long silence, in which Mrs. Ashley's breathing could be heard, and the shuffle of Owen's feet, and the creak of Howard's harness. When she had finished she lay back on her pillows and the letter fell to the coverlet under one limp hand. Her voice came slow and lifeless.

"I have already sent word to her Majesty a fortnight ago that much as I desire to see her and obey her commands in all things I am not able to travel now—nor even to leave my bed—as surely you can see."

"I see all that," he acknowledged kindly. "But my commission is to fetch your Grace to London, quick or dead, and 'tis no time for quibbling with the Queen." He perceived the gathering terror in her face and became clumsily reassuring. "Nay, nay, lass, never look so scared! The Queen has sent her own physicians to make you ready for the journey—and her own litter, too, for your comfort on the way."

"I thank the Queen's Grace for her tender care of me," said

Elizabeth, very low. "The Queen knows that I would contend with death itself to offer my life before her Majesty—and I think likely the journey to London at this time will surely kill me, if that is what she desires."

"Come, come, there is no such extremity of haste—take heart, child, I promise you we shall travel by easy stages—the thing being chiefly to appear to move, eh ?" He cocked a bright, knowing eye at her, which was met by a blank refusal to see the joke. So thin, so ill, so frightened—so young. His sentimental soldier's heart was being melted entirely, as hard-bitten hearts can be by weak things, and small things, and children. He meant her to see that she could trust him to protect and humour her to the limit of his strict commission, and she would not. He hoped he was no bullying ruffian, to harry a sick maid—could she not discern as much, and give a man a smile for his pains ? So flat, so white—so grave. "Come, come, Dr. Wendy will soon put you right, as he has done before this ! Tell him your trouble, lass—show him your tongue—and bid your women pack whatever you will need at Court. 'Tis as much as my head is worth to offend the Queen in her present temper !"

"And what of mine ?" said Elizabeth.

"Your temper ?" he grinned, having glimpsed it, but she would not see a jest.

"What is my head worth, if I go to London now ?" she said.

He had no answer ready for that. Mrs. Ashley made a movement toward the bed, and paused, watching him. Elizabeth's eyes were fixed blindly on the place where her feet made a small, quiet hummock under the bedclothes.

"Ah, but you need have no fear of that," he said unhappily, and wondered if it rang quite true through the swift chill doubt which assailed him.

"Need I not ? And how are you so sure ?"

"I take it that your Grace's conscience is clear," he observed anxiously.

"Oh, yes—but what good is that to me, when the Queen is ready to believe any lying knave's word before mine ?"

"You may be sure I will always do what I can," he said, and at last his sincerity penetrated her abstraction.

Flat on her pillows, she turned her eyes to him, searched his honest good will with a long look, and began methodically to refold Mary's letter. Her fingers shook, and she gave it up half finished.

"You will not find me ungrateful," she murmured. "Pray treat this house as your own, my lord—your men will want food, and beds for the night—rouse my servants—and command freely for yourself whatever you require—" Her voice drifted away.

He lingered, looking down at her helplessly.

"I can give you a day," he offered. "That will allow these doctor fellows' medicines a chance to act for your benefit. You will be stronger then."

"Your lordship is very kind," she whispered, not looking at him.

"The Queen has sent her litter," he reiterated futilely, trying to comfort her. For surely such thoughtfulness on the Queen's part augured no ill will. . . .

"Her Majesty does me great favour."

Howard looked at Mrs. Ashley, who would not meet his eyes—at Owen and Wendy, who nodded—and clanked to the door, trying to step softly in his spurs. There he turned. Elizabeth lay motionless on the pillows, her profile sharp against the candles beyond the bed.

"I bid your Grace good night," he bowed.

The least inclination of her head dismissed him—he was already forgotten. He withdrew, tactful and troubled, making way for the doctors. Below stairs, all gruffness and efficiency, he set a guard about the house, supped almost in silence, and went heavily to bed.

The doctors put her kind and foolish questions—she answered hazily—they listened to Mrs. Ashley's more voluble accounts of the malady, her own suspicions, theories, and fears—they pooh-poohed poison with professional scorn—they prescribed physic—Elizabeth swallowed obediently the vile mess they held to her lips—they pronounced to each other the solemn opinion that she could be moved the day after to-morrow without peril to her life—nodded at each other wisely, with significant looks—became belatedly cheerful—and finally left her alone with Mrs. Ashley.

The candles had burnt down in their sconces, and the February dawn was still far away ; but sleep was farther. Elizabeth and the fond, stupid woman who was mother, governess, and friend, looked at each other without words, and Mrs. Ashley began to cry. Elizabeth covered her face with her cold, damp hands—but tears would not come.

XIV

That slow journey to London was an endless nightmare of giddiness and mysterious pain, and the effort not to swoon, not to cry and scream and plead, not to forget her young pride and dignity. She travelled under an armed guard, like a veritable prisoner. The people ran to the roadside to see her pass, and shook their heads dolefully, and some of them prayed God aloud to protect and preserve her Grace. Elizabeth heard, and shuddered.

Thirty terrible miles in winter weather, by easy stages. On the way the news met them of the execution of Lady Jane and Guildford. And Courtenay, it was said, was back in the Tower. Jane and Guildford had gone together. Did that mean that she and Courtenay . . . Silently she looked at Lord Howard, while her eyes seemed to grow and grow—*What did I tell you ?* was in that wide, feverish gaze—and Howard was the first to look away. Hardened campaigner and seasoned courtier that he was, there was an oddness in the pit of his stomach as he contemplated his always distasteful commission anew. But before God he had never meant to fetch this sick child to her death ! But surely it was unthinkable that the Queen intended. . . .

After that they were frankly allies, inarticulate, intuitive. They both saw how important was delay—each day gained now made for her safety. The Queen was angry and frightened and desperate. She must be given time to cool off, time to think, time to remember blood ties and royal clemency ; time for her own unrevengeful nature to adjust itself to this first sweeping reaction. Meanwhile, Elizabeth's weakness and fatigue were far from feigned, and Howard was able to make the stages of the journey even shorter, while the days slipped by—in order that Mary might have a chance to collect herself.

They entered London through Highgate on the twenty-second, late in the afternoon. It was rather like a funeral procession—the crowds were silent and a little awed, as the litter passed by—women wept audibly, and children stared round-eyed with a gruesome interest born of half comprehended whisperings among their elders, and men's eyes lingered on the sad, still princess.

Elizabeth had decided long ago that the people, and the good will of the mob, were her surest defence. Now would be a chance, one more, a last fleeting opportunity to make a direct personal appeal to the people before she was swallowed up in whatever captivity was in store for her. She had thought it all out during the day of preparation at Ashridge, propped up in bed choosing books and gowns and necessaries for the luggage, directing the packing of her boxes. And so on that dull cold afternoon the litter curtains were looped back and the Queen's sister was revealed to the view of the sympathetic populace—pale and proud and silent and unsmiling, her chin held high, her red-gold hair carefully dressed, the swathing rugs revealing her slim reclining figure clothed in maiden white. No merry glances at the crowd this time—no passing jokes with babies. Her eyes fixed darkly on the formless menace of her future, she seemed almost unaware of the emotion which followed her through Smithfield and Fleet Street to Whitehall, where the Queen was.

Arriving at the Palace, she was conducted to an obscure corner overlooking the River, at the end of a corridor where no one could come or go without passing the guards. She requested an immediate audience with Mary, and it was promptly refused. She was to see no one. She was to communicate with no one. Howard had received his orders.

With a little gesture of despair Elizabeth then drew from her finger the ring which Mary had placed there at parting only two months before : *If ever I am angry with you, there is my token.* . . . Surely now if ever was the time to remind Mary that she had promised to try to trust her and to hear her defence from her own lips. She hesitated to part with the talisman for fear of some greater need. But perhaps if Mary saw it at once, saw that she at least had not forgotten that they had parted friends. . . . She placed the ring in Howard's hand, and he swore to deliver it to the Queen himself.

The next morning the Duke of Suffolk was beheaded on Tower

Hill. Wyatt was being re-examined daily, bribed, threatened, and some said he would be tortured, in the hope of extracting something from him which would prove Elizabeth's complicity. He did his utmost to drag her down with him, but it was not quite enough. Others of his followers and her servants were subjected to threats of death and to torture, and, more cannily still, were offered freedom and immunity, in return for one positive circumstance which would establish her guilt. It was a disgraceful business, and most of them told all they knew and a bit more. But it was not enough. They could find no letters written by her, prove no secret interviews. And everyone knew exactly where she had been, throughout the uprising.

Courtenay, while he denied everything, made no craven attempt to hide behind her skirts as some did, or else he had really nothing worth telling. His life was saved so far by a technicality of Mary's new treason laws passed immediately after her accession, and designed to moderate the severity of Henry's old methods—it had been decreed in the previous autumn that passive consent to treason without overt action was not a capital offence. As matters stood, neither Courtenay nor Elizabeth could be condemned to death ; so far from leading an army on his own behalf, Courtenay had been an unwilling captain in the Queen's ranks ; Elizabeth was confined to her bed in the country. A feeble attempt was made to prove that when he fled from Wyatt's advance at Charing Cross it was a prearranged betrayal masquerading as cowardice. But like Elizabeth he had committed nothing to paper which could be used against him, though the matter of a cypher cut on his guitar was brought up. However, Chancellor Gardiner had an enduring fondness for his protégé and was determined to save him. If on these grounds Gardiner preserved Courtenay from the block, he automatically saved Elizabeth too, for their fates hung by the same small thread. Suppressed Courtenay evidence, if Gardiner had any, was bound to be suppressed Elizabeth evidence. Not even Gardiner's tortuous methods could as yet convict one without the other. But Renard was impatient for the sacrifice of both, and the Chancellor took an obstinate personal satisfaction in thwarting the hated Spanish influence which clamoured for the best blood in England.

If Renard did appear to have won in the matter of a bridegroom, he was not to be permitted to celebrate Philip's betrothal with Courtenay's death ; and Gardiner promised himself secretly to bring down the Queen's troublesome sister some other way and in his own good time. And in the midst of this national chaos, Egmont returned with the ratified marriage treaty and the betrothal ring, which Mary received emotionally in a solemn proxy wedding.

Egmont brought also a recommendation from the Emperor that Elizabeth should be conclusively dealt with in some way before he sent his only son into territory where the imperial protection did not extend ; Charles added that he relied on Mary's honour not to neglect any step which made for Philip's personal safety in her

domain. Mary, miserably aware that recent events in England had given grounds for his apprehensions, was flicked on the raw. The Duke of Savoy was again offered as a possible husband for Elizabeth. But as the Duke had hopes of regaining his lands and titles from the French, and therefore required heirs of an unquestionable legitimacy, it was necessary that the matter of Elizabeth's birth should be cleared up by declaring her unquestionably legitimate. This was the one thing Mary regarded as utterly impossible. If she declared Elizabeth legitimate, what of possible heirs born to herself and Philip? It looked as though Savoy as a solution was no good.

Renard begged that Elizabeth should be at least locked up in the Tower before Philip set foot in England. Then they would know where she was, he pointed out. She could hardly foment a rebellion from the Tower, nor could she poison the Prince of Spain. In despair Mary offered each member of the Council in turn the custody of this dangerous prisoner, and the responsibility for her future good behaviour—and each one in turn thought of his own head first and declined. They preferred that she should go to the Tower now rather than themselves later on if something went wrong. Renard kept hinting that the Spanish marriage plans would remain at a standstill till Mary came to some decision about her sister. Mary protested that she could not rest at night for her desire of Philip's arrival and her anxiety for his safety when he came. She explained again and again that everything possible was being done to gather the requisite evidence against Elizabeth. But she refused point-blank to execute her without complete proof of her guilt.

Wyatt was condemned to death on the fifteenth of March—nothing more could be got from him, and he had failed to entangle Elizabeth sufficiently even to warrant bringing her to open trial. The Council sat all night, debating her fate now that she was to survive Wyatt after all—and they reached no decision. The next morning Gardiner headed a deputation to Elizabeth's rooms; his object was to bully some damaging admissions out of her himself.

She had been left to think things over in the shadow of the scaffold for more than a fortnight. With Suffolk just dead and Wyatt about to die, she had had a good scare. It was infuriating to find that in a monotonous, mild, shy voice she still maintained her futile assertion of innocence and ignorance of Wyatt's plot. Gardiner blustered and accused and threatened. For the first time she learned of that rifled dispatch case of Noailles's, and of the two letters from Wyatt to her which had been intercepted by Mary's spies. Softly, warily, keeping her temper, thinking before she spoke, she steadfastly denied communicating with the French King, denied receiving messages from Wyatt. The last was a sort of lie, but she could stick to it—they could prove nothing—she could not prevent his messages from starting, but she had not received any.

Gardiner fumed up and down the room, while she watched him, mouse-like, maddeningly quiet, from her chair. The Queen knew her to be guilty, said Gardiner; submit to the Queen, and ask her

pardon at once, and doubtless it would be granted ; but this idle insistence on an innocence known to be false was what forced them to hold her captive ; therefore submit and plead. Elizabeth's chin came up. She was less meek and soft. Submission confessed a crime, she reminded them, and pardon belonged to a delinquent. And not until they could prove that she stood in need of the Queen's pardon for a single act of hers, would she make use of his lordship's counsel.

They couldn't prove anything. That was their trouble. They could only refuse again to allow her to see Mary herself, and withdraw with a threat that she would hear more anon. Gardiner went away with his hat over his eyes ; a bad sign. Mary had ordered him to make a case against Elizabeth and he had not frightened one useful word out of the prisoner. Perhaps the Tower would make her sing a different tune, he decided savagely. Give her a fortnight in the Tower, and then try again. Offer her freedom in return for a full confession—and out of the confession could come the verdict and the block. They were so sure that somehow she was lying.

There was another all-night session of the Council. Howard and Sussex spoke out fearlessly in her defence ; Howard because he liked her, and felt the stirring of the blood tie ; Sussex because he was a just man, a kind man, old enough to be her father—and had known and served her father. Gardiner glared at them suspiciously. Why should anyone risk his neck on behalf of a scraggy girl the Queen wished to destroy ? Go to work roundly, hunt the jill down, and be in at the death—that was the only safe way, these days, when no man's head was worth a month's purchase.

Elizabeth slept badly that night. There were armed men in the garden under her windows, and in her ante-chamber—some of her attendants were missing. The walls were closing in.

In the morning the Marquis of Winchester and the Duke of Sussex waited on her early, to announce that a barge was waiting to conduct her to the Tower. At first she would not understand. Mary could not mean to do this thing, without a word between them. It was a mistake—a hoax—a test to try her loyalty and courage—a ruse to frighten some confession out of her which was not in her to make—or else a cruel jest. Not the Tower, surely—never the Tower, between herself and Mary—had they a commission in writing ? They shook their heads. There was no mistaking the Queen's resolve. And the tide would not wait. She would please come at once.

But no, she would not believe it. She was the Queen's sister, had they forgotten that ? And she was innocent of all the infamous charges against her—no one had proved her guilty. She was as loyal to the Queen as any subject that drew breath. The word caught in her throat. Breath. The breath of her body that was so dear to her—life—even life asshe lived it now, without full liberty.... And yet—Jane—Guildford—Suffolk—Wyatt.

She caught at another straw. This was Gardiner's doing, and Mary did not know. Gardiner had overreached himself, then.

She demanded an audience with the Queen before she left Whitehall. They had their instructions on that and they stood firm. The Queen would not see her. Winchester grew restive before her agonized entreaty—get it over—get her out of sight—a bad business, but get on with it—come—the tide. . . .

Elizabeth turned from him to Sussex, who stood silent, biting his bearded lip. Quick always to detect a weakness for herself, she began to concentrate all her appeal on him. She begged for a delay of one tide more while she sought an audience with the Queen—a thing by no possible means to be granted, or even solicited, said Winchester; an hour, then, while she wrote a letter to the Queen—no letters could be permitted, said Winchester. Her eyes clung feverishly to Sussex's embarrassed gaze—six lines only—a mere matter of two dozen words—a question of minutes—she would be so quick. . . .

Suddenly Sussex went literally to his knees before this distracted daughter of the beloved sovereign of his youth. They would wait, by God, while she wrote a letter! Upon his own peril, she should not only have liberty to write, but as he was a true man under Providence he would deliver her letter to the Queen's own hands and bring her back an answer, whatsoever came of it.

"My lord," said Elizabeth, and her eyes dazzled the old nobleman entirely, "I shall not forget this morning."

Winchester was aghast, but Sussex would not listen to him. This white-faced, desperate girl should have every chance at the Queen's mercy so long as it was in his power to grant her respite.

They sent hurriedly for writing materials, and she sat down at her desk. The sentences tumbled over themselves in her mind, while she hesitated, the pen in her fingers. As usual the need for imperative action cleared her head and gave her strength to carry through her design. Collapse might come later. But now her hand was steady and her heart beat strongly. Once the Duke of Somerset had been nonplussed and beaten off with written words. Perhaps they would serve with Mary too. . . . One must be brief—fearless and straightforward and plain—and humble one's sturdy pride in the dust at the foot of the throne. . . .

With Winchester tramping up and down across the door and muttering of consequences, and old Sussex staring tactfully out the window at the dreary garden paths, her pen began to hurry down the page.

XV

Mary sat in her own chamber, alone except for a favourite waiting-woman who bent above an embroidery frame by the window.

The Queen's right hand gripped a single sheet of paper, neatly written, but with interlinings, which showed haste before a careful re-reading. The left, where Philip's magnificent betrothal ring

burned its white diamond fire, was knotted on the arm of her chair ; her face was set in grim, weary lines of obstinacy.

She must choose again, and choose quickly, between a problematical love and an old affection. Her heart was set on Philip, and for her it must be Philip or Elizabeth, but never both, from now on. Whether Elizabeth was guilty in this recent uprising or not, she was a menace to Philip's peace of mind. Therefore she must be put out of the way. Not killed—unless she could be proved guilty after all. But kept safely where she could do no harm. Else perhaps Philip might not come at all. The sniggering taunt of the populace had of course reached Mary's ears—afraid of a wench, they said.

She had been driven to it at last. She had hoped the thing would solve itself with Philip's arrival before they could force her to act regarding Elizabeth. But now she saw that they meant to keep Philip from her until they had got their way. She wished that Philip would take things into his own hands, but apparently he was content to wait. His tactless lack of eagerness was wounding her self-esteem unbearably—did he think she was so old already that a few months more or less could make no difference?—had he no desire whatever to claim his promised bride? Well, after all, why should he want to come? There was a woman in Valladolid that he loved—a woman who had borne him children—a woman who was perhaps beautiful, a Spanish woman born to love, who had learned his ways, and knew how to make him comfortable—Mary's hatred of the Doña Isabella de Osorio was rooted in envy—to have to try to take that woman's place! . . .

The least she could do, from Philip's point of view, was to show all possible zeal for his safety. Perhaps it even looked as though she did not care either, about when and if their marriage took place. Perhaps he had no idea how she desired and dreaded—and yet she grew older every day, plainer, greyer—hardly a maid about the Court but was handsomer to catch his eye than she would be. Elizabeth too. Her fingers tightened convulsively on the paper in her lap. Elizabeth with her clear skin and shining hair, her laughter, her strange enchantment, which even Renard felt—better to put Elizabeth out of sight, at least till afterwards—at least till—Mary's thoughts stumbled and turned aside—till one was Philip's wife. How could she endure to have Elizabeth's magic youth at the wedding . . .

Still, could one do this thing without giving her a hearing—when she had even sent the ring, believing in it—but Mary shrank from the level gaze and the loyal, eloquent protests she knew the interview would bring upon her. She was tired—not well—Elizabeth never seemed to be tired, to flag, as one did at thirty-seven—Elizabeth was young—so very young, and so—alive. . . .

Mary stirred, and sighed. Words were looking up at her from the letter in her hand—disturbing words, in Elizabeth's beautiful, legible handwriting. She raised the letter close to her eyes again and began unwillingly to read it for the third time.

If any ever did try this old saying, that a king's word was more than another man's oath, I most humbly beseech your Majesty to verify it to me, and to remember your last promise and my last demand—that I be not condemned without answer and due proof, which it seems that now I am :—

Yes, Mary remembered her promise, with the ring—at least, she had not actually said—besides, that was more than three months ago. She had not foreseen Thomas Wyatt then. And then, too, she had been expecting Philip before Christmas . . .

—for without cause proved, I am by your Council from you commanded to go to the Tower, a place more wanted for a false traitor than a true subject ; which though I know I deserve it not, yet in the face of all this realm appears that it is proved. I pray God I may die the shamefullest death that ever any died, afore I may mean any such thing, and to this present hour I protest before God (who shall judge my truth whatever malice may devise) that I never practiced, counselled, nor consented to anything that might be prejudicial to your person any way, or dangerous to the state by any means.—

That was definite enough. Elizabeth could always marshal words at her bidding. Yes, that was a strong defence. Mary's eyes read on, almost against her will :

—And therefore I humbly beseech your Majesty to let me answer afore yourself and not suffer me to trust your Councillors ; yea, and that afore I be further condemned. Howbeit I trust assuredly your Highness will give me leave to do it afore I go, that thus shamefully I may not be cried out on as now I shall be—yea, and without cause. Let conscience move your Highness to take some better way with me than to make me be condemned in all men's sight afore my desert be known.—

Some better way. But there was none. No one of the lords of the Council would take charge of so dangerous a prisoner in such uncertain times ; they could not trust her to remain passive in the hands of her friends, guiltless in the eyes of her enemies. They dared not risk it ; not even Howard who was so openly her friend. Mary was not altogether satisfied with Howard these days—to have the Admiral of her fleet, the fleet which was to meet Philip on his arrival, an avowed partisan of Elizabeth seemed unwise. Sussex too had fallen under the spell, and he was old enough to know better. But even Sussex would not give her lodging in his own house—he had still some remnants of caution and sanity left.

No, Mary alone must be responsible for her sister, and this palace-restraint of the past fortnight was too awkward. It would not do after Philip came. There seemed to be no place for Elizabeth but the Tower, so long as the Queen herself was responsible for her. That was the logical place for the personal prisoners of the sovereign, and always had been. And Mary had rather never have been born, she told herself fiercely, than that harm should come to Philip . . .

Elizabeth was being unreasonable ; making a nuisance of herself instead of submitting gracefully to the Queen's will. It would be useless for them to discuss the matter, face to face. There was no argument, no possible compromise. Nothing could come of an interview between them except more unpleasantness and strain. And yet—

—I most humbly beseech your Highness to pardon this my boldness which innocence procures me to do, together with hope of your natural kindness which I trust will not see me cast away without desert. . . . I have heard in my time of many cast away for want of coming to the presence of their prince, and in late days I heard my Lord of Somerset say that if his brother had been suffered to speak with him he had never suffered ; but the persuasions were made to him so great that he was brought to a belief that he could not live safely if the Admiral lived, and that made him give his consent to his death. Though these persons are not to be compared to your Majesty, yet I pray God that evil persuasions persuade not one sister against the other ; and all for that they have heard false report and not harkened to the truth known.—

Seymour, she meant by that. She had the bad grace to mention that old scandalous business. Had Somerset really said such a thing as he felt his own time drawing near ? Not to Mary. But Elizabeth had seen him in the spring of 1551, after Mary had ridden away in disgrace. Was it not possible that Somerset, conscious of Elizabeth's ascendancy at Court under Northumberland's régime, had tried to excuse his former conduct toward her, in something very like an apology for his brother's death ? He might well have tried, too late, to conciliate the favourite sister of the dying King. The mixed pronouns and sketchy punctuation of those hurried sentences made for simple truth written with headlong conviction. And it was a shrewd stroke. Two brothers, falsely wrought upon, with canny advantage taken of their opposite natures, and with no opportunity to reach a mutual understanding ; and now two sisters, equally opposite, and perhaps one of them wrongly advised. . . .

—Therefore once again, kneeling with humbleness of my heart because I am not suffered to bow the knees of my body, I humbly crave to speak with your Highness, which I would not be so bold as to desire if I knew not myself most clear, as I know myself most true.—

It would be perhaps only just to see her, though, of course, one had never actually promised—and after all, what was it that she should go to the Tower ? She would be comfortable there—and safe. To live in the Tower did not necessarily mean to live in a dungeon. —*condemned in all men's sight afore my desert be known*—so that was what troubled her—her precious popularity—her damnable pride of it—thrown in the face of her Queen ! And now she wanted to come here—to plead and coax and smile and tremble—her eyes

would fill with tears—she would be humble and ingratiating—see how humble she could be even on paper—she would be frightened and young and helpless and pitiful—she would be—Elizabeth. No, no, one could not see her, one dared not face her, for she knew how to plead a cause, and somehow she could soften one's very bones with her smile. And these last few lines had a disconcerting ring of desperate truth and deep sincerity—

—And as for the traitor Wyatt, he might peradventure write me a letter, but on my faith I never received any from him ; and as for the copy of my letter sent to the French king, I pray God confound me eternally if ever I sent him word, message, token, or letter, by any means. And to this my truth I will stand in to my death.

Your Highness's most faithful subject that hath been from the beginning and will be to my end,

ELIZABETH.

They had intercepted all the letters Wyatt wrote her, then. And the other had been a device of Renard's, or Noailles's. One never knew whom to blame or whom to trust these days—*someone* was lying. But not—perhaps—Elizabeth. See how she had had the caution and the wit to fill the blank half of the page with slanting lines, so that nothing could be added. See how she defended herself, so courageously, and eloquently, against what must have seemed even to her foreordained defeat. Squeezed against the lower corner was one last brief appeal :

I humbly crave but only one word of answer from yourself.

See how she fought, to the very bottom of her page, to the last hour of her freedom. Mary could admire courage—she had it, too. And she could envy cleverness—and subtlety—and charm. Even Elizabeth's letter was disarming with that elusive enchantment which hung about her like a fragrance. . . .

Mary straightened.

"Summon my Lord Sussex," she said to the quiet figure by the window.

A very few moments later he bowed before her. He must have been kicking his heels all this time in the ante-room, awaiting her decision. Why, the Palace had dined since she saw him last. Had he gone hungry—and in Elizabeth's service, not hers ? Mary hardened. She trusted Sussex—counted on him—regarded him as her property. He had been among the first to reach her during those bad days in July. And now he went without his dinner in order that there might be no delay in carrying a possible pardon to Elizabeth. So he cared nothing for his Queen, now that that witch had set her wiles upon him. . . .

"Well, you have lost me the tide over this business," she greeted him sourly, and the letter crackled in her hand.

"Your Majesty, I—it is a grave step—I thought only to allow her Grace—to implore your Majesty to consider—"'

" You had not dared to treat my father so ! " cried Mary, suddenly in a red rage at what looked like out and out desertion to another's cause. " When he commanded he was obeyed—and instantly ! If he stood here now where I stand, Sussex, would you dare ask your sovereign to consider ? *Would you ?* Ah, if my father could but come alive for one hour," cried poor Mary, " *he* would teach you what comes of making promises behind your sovereign's back to one on whom a just retribution has fallen ! "

" Your Majesty——"

" See that she goes on the next tide, Sussex—no, no, that comes near midnight—how can I trust such half-hearted officers as you not to smuggle her away in the dark ? "

" Your Majesty——!"

" See that she is closely kept to-night where she bides—and to-morrow morning on the early tide mind that she goes to the Tower without fail ! I want no more letters from her—nor shall any communication of any kind pass in or out of her rooms to-night ! Let that be clear, Sussex—lest you run tattling to her now that the Queen is in a temper fit to tweak your ears, and that all your fine promises to her have come to naught ! "

Sussex was an old man—old enough to be the father whose mighty spirit she invoked, and whom he had faithfully served. He ventured one last defence, one small-voiced remonstrance, on the strength of his grey hairs.

" Your Majesty mistakes—I gave her Grace no hope of—I made her Grace no promises, save to convey the letter to your hand and bring her back an answer——"

" There is no answer," said Mary harshly, and turned away.

He was dismissed.

XVI

Elizabeth waited all day. Dinner came and went, with no word from Sussex or the Queen. Pride forced the food down her throat, so that each dish went back duly tasted. Then she stood a long time at the window, staring out over the barren garden to the chilly stars above the river, and heard the changing of the guard in her ante-chamber.

At last it was time to go to bed, and still she had no reply. She tried to think it a good sign—Mary was considering—Mary always slept ill—she would be sitting up, thinking—remembering—a message might come from her at any hour of the night. And where was Sussex ? Waiting outside Mary's door ? Perhaps at a meeting of the Council on her behalf ? Or had he received already a refusal from the Queen so prompt and crushing he dared not even return with it to her ?

By midnight she was on her knees before the crucifix Mary had had hung in her room, trying to pray—a mad, feverish jargon of childhood Latin, reformed English, and Mary's insistent Catholic ritual.

In the end her whispering babble strayed into an old familiar channel : *Pater noster, qui es in coelis—sanctificetur nomen tuum—dear God deliver me from this peril and set me safely again in mine own house—adveniat regnum tuum ; fiat voluntas tua*—ah, no, no, preserve me from the Tower in pity's name, I have done nothing wrong—I cannot die, I am too young, I have so much to do—*fiat voluntas tua*—no, no, no, he has not sinned, he is too young to die!—the words faltered on her lips—what had she said?—her brain groped dazedly after the echo of some old supplication—she had half forgotten, it was so long ago—but she had prayed for someone else like this—someone had prayed for someone like this, on her knees beside the bed—at Chelsea—years and years ago—tears ran out between her thin fingers pressed against her cheeks—and why was she crying now?—it did not matter to him now—and now it was her own life she prayed for—she had not thought before of herself like that—in those strange far-off days when she was safe—safe?—so small a word, so easily lost—*sed libera nos a malo*—yes, yes, deliver us—dear God, deliver us. . . .

The candles sputtered in their own grease. The fire was out. She rose stiffly in the cold room—looked about her vaguely, chafing her hands together—and crawled like a tired child into bed for warmth, kicking off her shoes to cradle one chill foot after the other in her comforting hand—pulled the coverlet up to her chin.

The March dawn found her huddled there, fully dressed, her eyes staring, staring at the dim daylight which had come at last. She had slept once, to be wakened by a dream where she ran screaming from something unseen, and gained no speed and made no sound—wakened and dozed again to feel herself falling . . .

She slid out, crumpled and heavy-eyed, from the small warmth she had made in the bedclothes, and stood again at the window in the icy room, watching the break of day, which came laggard with the lack of a rising sun. The world was misty and chill. Had Jane Grey watched a dawn like this, her last, only a few days ago? How would it feel to know, without the vestige of a doubt or a hope, while one's warm blood still ran vigorously and healthily through a body unbenumbed by illness or age, that before this sun had set one would be—very hideously—dead. . . . Death was a thing which came at the end, when one had done and seen a great deal and was tired—or as release from a tormented body one had grown to hate—or—or—but never was it meant to be this sheer stopping, between one breath and the next, with one's eyes wide open and one's heart at full beat—this wilful blotting out, unfinished—this lopping off of heads . . .

Jane had died with her usual meek dignity, they said. But had Jane really wanted to live, and be Queen? Jane was little and sad and browbeaten, and had no future anyway. Perhaps Jane had not cared very much. Still, it wanted courage, didn't it—to face the scaffold in the early morning, the clean straw, the block—the masked headsman, and the priest—the crowd, gazing up—and somewhere, mercifully hidden, perhaps, but inevitably there, the

dull cold gleam of the axe—those awful last few moments before the stroke, and the chance that the axe might slip—might. . . . But this was madness ! Just because one went to the Tower it did not necessarily mean. . . . A thin hand crept up to lie against her throat.

For hours she had stopped the ears of her shuddering mind from the name of Anne Boleyn, but now it would be heard. Jane had been brave—and how had Anne Boleyn behaved, when her time came ? Had she loved living more than Jane, and been less willing to forfeit all the dear, familiar days she had had, and all the sweet unguessable years to come, which they robbed her of ? Elizabeth did not know. She could not ask. But it would have helped to be sure that Anne Boleyn had not wept, nor swooned, nor faltered. Had she known on her way to the Tower, what was to be the end of it ? Or had she gone bravely, hoping against hope, as one always must, that it would not come to—that. Anne was the first woman to be sent to the block, in England. But now it was no unusual thing, it seemed, for a woman to die like a man, in public.

One must not think ahead. One must approach this thing step by step, coolly, hardily, with one's chin well up. To break now, to show fear, to ask for mercy, might seem like guilt. . . .

A silent maid stole in and laid and lighted a new fire. Mrs. Ashley came, red-eyed and anxious, and helped her change into a fresh gown, and did her hair. They brought her breakfast. She forced herself to eat, and then picked up a book and sat down with it near the hearth. Her hands were cold and steady.

Carefully she found her place, marked day before yesterday with a bit of green ribbon between the leaves, and set her mind to follow the narrow track of the Latin type. One must not think—one dared not anticipate—one's mind must not be allowed to wander among horrors.

"Arcadiae partem eam quae fines Argiuorum contingit, Tegetae, & Mantinenses tenant : Et Arcadici quidem nominis populi omnes—"

No matter how long there was to wait, panic must be staved off. No matter what the order was when it came, it must be received without flinching. If she must go to the Tower, she would go as calmly as though she set forth for Ashridge or Hatfield. No one should know this dreadful weakness of her knees, this aching sickness inside. Prayer had reduced itself to the last essential—*Make me brave—dear God, make me brave !* That was all now. That was all she wanted. Courage, not to let them see her frightened. *Ab hoc rege totam regionem eam Pelasgiam appellatum ferunt. Huius filius Lycaon—make me brave, oh, make me brave—nonnulla, vel sapientius quam pater fuis excogitauit. Lycosuram—*

There was a stir in the ante-room. She waited, breathless, her eyes on the page, her mind closed to the despair the long night had wrought, teeth set against the dreadful pounding of her heart.

It was Sussex again, and Winchester. The barge was waiting. She was to come at once.

She rose without haste—remembered to lay the green ribbon

carefully between the pages again, angry that her fingers shook—laid the book on the table beside her.

"God's will be done," said Elizabeth with twisted lips.

But it was the Queen's will, not God's, she knew—it was Mary's. Mary, who had broken her promise to listen to the truth if ever her sister was accused ; Mary, whose token went for nothing after three short months.

Someone laid a cloak about her shoulders. Someone preceded her to the door, and waited there, bowing. *God, make me brave.* She passed through, into the ante-room. It was full of men-at-arms, who closed in behind her as she walked on. Between Sussex and Winchester she walked steadily, swiftly, through empty corridors to a small side-door which opened into the garden.

There was fumbling with the lock, and a mutter of impatience—then a cold wind, church bells, and drizzling rain. It was Palm Sunday, and the worst weather of the year.

The mist hung low over the River, where a barge pulled at its mooring ropes against the garden stairs. The path was lined with soldiers. Three of the Queen's women were waiting to attend her, and two of her own had been permitted to follow her, and her own usher—a devoted lad, and a pet of Mrs. Ashley's, accustomed to make himself useful in a dozen ways in the depleted household.

Elizabeth turned and looked up at the windows of Whitehall facing blankly toward the River—her eyes lingered on the casement which had swung open above her, framing Edward's pallid eagerness, that day when she walked with Cecil—poor Edward—and where was Cecil now, and what would he think of this, when he heard ? Perhaps he had gone to the Tower too. Robert Dudley was supposed to be there, under death sentence.

The wind caught her cloak and whipped it about her knees. She shivered, and entered the barge with a quick light step. The others plumped in after her, and the rhythmic dip of the oars began. She sat silent, watching the garden stairs and Edward's window recede into the mist.

The tide was still very low for shooting the bridge, for they had been canny enough to move her while the people were safe in church. The boatmen checked timidly above the bridge, eyeing the eddy which swirled muddily around the piles, and Winchester ordered them on sharply. A few faces had begun to appear at windows of the houses that lined the bridge, watching with curiosity so ill-advised an attempt to pass before the tide was high enough to float a boat free. They could not recognize Elizabeth where she sat, and her face was unfamiliar to the multitude anyway. The barge was a plain one without the royal arms. But a small crowd gathered, idly speculative, though most of London had gone to church bearing their palms as bidden.

Urged on by Winchester, the boatmen made the attempt too soon ; the stern touched bottom with a sickening grind, and the bow swung round in the eddy—a quick oar saved it from crashing

into the bridge—with a heave and a deep career it was through the arch, and the crowd drew an audible breath.

Elizabeth, gripping the bench, had made no sound. And now the bridge fell away behind her, with its rows of heads on pikes, left there since the Wyatt Rebellion executions ; the carrion birds were circling sluggishly above the City, where so many corpses still hung in chains.

By the time they reached Traitor's Gate the drizzle had become a cold, wind-whipped rain. The water ran murkily well below the usual landing-level, with a strip of mud and ooze between. Elizabeth looked at it fastidiously, as the barge turned in between the dark gates, and they waited for her to rise and come ashore while the boat grounded unpleasantly against the stone.

"I shall wet my shoes," she said.

"Madam, you have no choice," snapped Winchester, his nerves on edge. "Will you take my cloak against the rain?"

She brushed him aside disdainfully, ignored his hand outstretched to steady her, stepped short into the water, righted herself with an effort which saved her from sinking above her ankles in the mud, and was on the slimy steps. The warders were drawn up in line to receive her, the Constable of the Tower at their head.

"What is all this?" she queried, eyeing them haughtily. "Must I be guarded by an army of villainous looking ruffians wherever I go?"

"It is but the customary reception of a prisoner, madam," said the Constable, and offered her his hand to firmer footing.

She ignored it too.

"So many for one weak woman," she observed, looking up at the great grey pile above her.

She stood in Anne Boleyn's footsteps—a prisoner. And she had dreamed of coming to the Tower far otherwise—as she had seen Mary come, triumphantly, cheered and blessed by happy crowds, with banners against a sunny sky—some day. . . . She made a few steps forward, conscious of eyes—her knees were shaking, and she sat down suddenly where she was, on a damp stone in the rain. Dimly she heard Sussex demanding a chair for her conveyance to shelter—and the Constable refused because it had not been commanded by the Queen. Dimly she heard a boyish sobbing—her usher. Then Sussex's voice again, and the weight of his cloak laid gently about her shoulders.

"Only a little way to shelter, your Grace—'tis an unwholesome place to sit, here in the rain."

"Better here than in a worse place," said Elizabeth, fighting to control the trembling she would not let them see. "God knows where my next step will bring me!" She rounded desperately on the snivelling usher behind her. "Is that the way to comfort me?" she demanded fiercely. "Have I not enough to bear without that noisy blubbering?" And as he gulped and wiped the mingled rain and tears from his cheeks with the back of his hand, her face softened to her swift amends which knit them all to her with such

sure bonds of love. "Nay, boy, I know—'tis for the loyalty you bear me—I never meant to scold—nay, see, I'm grateful—would there were more in higher places to care so much what becomes of me!" She rose, and pulled Sussex's cloak closer with a shiver. "Come, then—let's have a roof, even though it be a dungeon—my innocence needs no man's tears."

The words were stout, but in her soul she doubted as she spoke. Anne Boleyn—had she been so guilty, then? And little Jane—what had she done, after all?

Make me brave. . . . And so she passed in under the lowering gate, her chin well up, with Sussex's cloak clutched close to hide the trembling she could not control. And there was the clank of steel on steel as she went, and locks clicked home behind her, while the heavens symbolically wept.

PART FOUR

WOMAN

I

HE woke to black dark and a crouching silence. She lay and listened to the night, wide-eyed but inert, craftily quiet, as though she slumbered still. It was not new to her, this sudden wrenching back to tense awareness, out of the blessed oblivion of sleep. Practice kept her breathing regular and controlled her twitching nerves ; practice, and her pride.

Slowly the blank, staring terror of her awakening receded. Invisible in the moonless hour before dawn, her surroundings recalled themselves to her acute, blind senses. The room was high and square and sparsely furnished, but its casement windows opened on broad green lawns stretching away under ancient oaks. The night air was mild and fresh, and her straining imagination could supply at last the faint, far rustle of new leaves in the park. It was May in Oxfordshire, and the Tower lay behind her.

Now beneath her windows came the tramp of men-at-arms, and the brief, efficient sounds that accompanied the changing of the guard. Prisoner though she was, she took a woeful comfort from those stolid footfalls. She never feared a soldier. Collectively, as an inhuman machine driven by a power which could destroy her, those men-at-arms might become a part of the shadowy threat which still dogged her days. But individually, looked boldly in the face, they were a heartening, upstanding crew of likeable ruffians, whose blue eyes were often kind and sometimes—never mind. Already, at twenty, she knew where she was with English soldiers.

She knew too, shrewdly, that these men were posted below for a triple reason ; to prevent her rescue, her escape, and—her murder. With a little grateful sigh, she stirred at last and lay more easily, her cheek on one slim hand, her eyes less watchful but wide open, with nothing to see. Alone in the dark, Elizabeth lay awake at Woodstock.

It grew quiet again beneath her windows, and daylight did not come. She had no way to measure time. It might be anywhere between midnight and sunrise. She had not yet learned the routine of this newest captivity. Sixty blue-coated soldiers were on guard all day, and forty patrolled the grounds at night. Sir Henry Bedingfield

would tell her just so much and no more, parrying her questions from his bended knee, the most courteous of gaolers for all his harsh expediency of rule. "To guard her Grace from the dangers with which she was beset," he would put it, kneeling still, his fine iron-grey head bowed before her.

No doubt he kept her safe enough, this conscientious servant of the Queen ; safe even from the bungling good intentions of her so-called friends. The marching minutes left her reassured, but broad awake and longing for the light. How many dozens of times had she wakened like this, her taut young nerves responding cruelly to some faint sound, some dim dream, some echo of an old alarum. But the nights in the Tower had been a great deal worse than this. . . .

There, in that grim, bolted room beneath the great bell, not far from foolish Courtenay's prison lodging, Anne Boleyn's daughter had first met fear. Frightened she had been before, with moments of sharp panic hidden by a haughty chin and a pert, breathless answer. Her tongue had learned the swift, instinctive stab and parry of a rapier, which acts almost before the brain behind it thinks. The Seymour business had taught her that, among other things. But now, since the collapse of Thomas Wyatt's futile dream of crusade, she was acquainted with fear ; the cold, relentless reasoning terror which sat with her all night long in the Tower, and showed her how she was the child of arrogance and tyranny, and how the bitter daughter of Anne Boleyn's flouted predecessor sat now on the throne of England, a Tudor too. . . .

Elizabeth sighed the sharp, impatient sigh of the wakeful, and tried to blot out with the peaceful country stillness of Woodstock the long lonely horror of those Tower nights, heavy with the lack of exercise and air after an illness which had left her weak and wretched, stifling with the thick stone walls of a haunted prison. By day the endless, grilling hours of cross-examination, as Gardiner and his henchmen tried to drag from her one incriminating admission regarding Courtenay or Wyatt or Noailles, and their treasonous schemes against the Crown. By night the hopeless, growing conviction that she stood alone in a world of enemies.

A high hand, a cool head, and a ready tongue by day ; but at night, in the scanty privacy of her bedchamber (she was spied on always) the obstinate Lady Elizabeth's Grace was after all a frantic, driven girl who wanted to live more even than she wanted to rule. Her head was always aching, those endless Tower nights, while the creak of a door, the rattle of a sword-hilt, the passing jingle of a sentry's harness, would startle her stiff and leave her staring into the memory of the many mysterious vanishings which had occurred within those cold dark walls. It was only seventy years, or thereabouts, since the secret murder of those two little sons of Edward IV, who would have been her great-uncles, if they had lived to manhood —and yet if they had lived, grandfather Henry VII had never been King. . . . Avid of any occupation for her shuttling thoughts, she would lose herself in the tortuous mazes of ancestry and the right of succession. Anything was better than thinking of herself, and of

how easy it would be for her too to simply disappear and leave no trace, or—conveniently—to sicken and die of an innocent dish at dinner. . . .

She stirred again, impatiently, and her hands crept to cover her ears in a childish gesture as though to shut out the sound of her own memories. This was Woodstock, and Bedingfield for all his harshness was no murderer. But daylight would not come.

What had become of Courtenay by now? Would they let him go too? They had not let Wyatt go. Nor Suffolk. Nor Jane, whose only crime was the Tudor blood in her little blue veins, come down from a sister of the old King. And Robert Dudley? He was the son of his father, and Northumberland was long since dead on the scaffold. Guildford too. But Robert and two other brothers were still alive in the Tower, the last she had heard. She hoped they would let Robert go, sometime—he was young and handsome, with merry eyes—she had not forgotten him that day in Edward's room three years ago—quite the nicest young man she had seen in, oh, a long time—odd, how he stuck in one's memory, and yet—well, he had been very kind to Edward, who had adored him. And so it was for him that one was anxious, rather than that whelp Courtenay. Mary's spectacular freeing of prisoners on her accession came to mind; some day—it was a game Elizabeth still played on dark nights—*some day* it would be her turn to ride into the Tower and free prisoners of other reigns. Would Robert be one of them? The idea of Robert on his knees to her, as Courtenay had been that day to Mary, looking to her for mercy and kindness, was a pleasant one—not, of course, that one would not have him out long before, if that were possible—but while she dwelt on it, the windows grew grey and the first sleepy bird chirpings began.

Bedingfield's regime at Woodstock was strict indeed, for out of care for his own head he kept zealously to the letter of his commission from the Queen. He was a grizzled soldier, wholly without the airs and saving graces of the courtier. Elizabeth's high ways and contemptuous dignity seemed to him quite proper in the daughter of a king. He would have thought the less of her if she had not trampled him royally under foot and despised him for a common gaoler, even while he warmly protested against the epithet. Sometimes he rather despised himself, when he saw her pale and ailing and so resolutely innocent.

He did not relish his commission. But the Queen had laid this heavy trust upon him and to the last drop of his Norfolk blood he was loyal. His consolation was that while Elizabeth was his captive she was at least safe, equally from her well-wishers and her enemies. When he had brought her to Woodstock, on a chilly afternoon in mid-May, after what was very like a royal progress from the Tower, he was dismayed to find that only three doors in the house would lock, and that the accommodation for even the half-dozen servants allotted to her was so inadequate that some of them must be lodged in the village. She was permitted to inhabit the gate-house only, not the old palace which was in an even worse state of neglect;

and there were only four rooms, hastily furnished with some of the Queen's spare stuff and a few pieces from Hatfield. Bedingfield was grateful for the drought which held through the first month of their tenancy, and left time for the hasty mending of dilapidated roofs and casements before the heavy rains which set in during June. Even then, he saw it would be impossible to winter there, with the house in its patched-up condition.

He was embarrassed too by the Council's instructions to him that his prisoner should never speak to anyone if he did not hear what was said, nor send a communication anywhere which he did not see. He pointed out to them in a worried letter, sweating over his unaccustomed pen, that the women of her privy chamber naturally had access to her when he had not, and that her grooms passed freely in and out of the grounds on their way to sleep in the village, where the ubiquitous Parry had lodged himself at the Bull Inn. The Council would perceive, he hoped, that it was impossible for him to supervise a maid's every waking moment, or hold himself responsible for what she might do or say among her women. And as she was expected to finance this prison household, except for the soldiers, and Parry was to apply her rents to its expenses, his presence seemed inevitable, and in the end was grudgingly countenanced by the suspicious Council.

She was allowed no writing-paper, no pens, no ink—and her request for books to read became a matter for earnest debate and scrutiny, lest they contain some secret intelligence. Finally a volume of Cicero and the Psalms of David in Latin reached her through Parry. A former servant who brought some unsolicited fresh-water fish for her table, and a brace of cock pheasants, was severely reprimanded for trespassing and sent away. They had to grant her insistent demand for greater freedom for exercise, and she walked in the garden every afternoon, with the understanding that Bedingfield himself was to carry the keys and be in constant attendance.

Meanwhile a sort of armed truce had grown up between the Queen's commissioner and his difficult charge. Sometimes even while she berated him for the jangling of his eternal keys and his rigid precautions against any communication with the outside world, their eyes would cross and waver with a gleam of mutual humour. She knew she was unreasonable to blame him for the orders he sedulously obeyed ; he was beginning to adore her for it. And a foolish joke was the end of all real enmity between them.

One of the servants who shared this latest restraint of hers in the country was an old groom who had been in Catherine's service and had known and worshipped his Princess since she was a child. He was almost the only remaining link, besides Parry and Mrs. Ashley, with those carefree days at Chelsea in the early days of Edward's reign. Once he had told her stories of his young days at the wars ; more recently she looked to his buoyant spirits and familiar saws for a sort of homely comfort in the midst of her blackest despair. A bent, wizened man, with a limp and an ugly face scar, he would

have followed her to the ends of the earth and died there for her good, content.

He made odd jobs for himself during the long, idle summer days at Woodstock ; the mending of a threshold lest she trip on it, the smoothing of a rough board or a rusty nail which might catch at her gown as she passed by, the tending of the few rank flowers in the overgrown garden for her pleasure. He was always busy, always droll, and never daunted. Each day he waited and hoped for the hour in late afternoon when she came out to walk along the weed-grown paths ; each day he hoarded some small thing against her coming, and if no flower bloomed worth the offering he fashioned a gift of words to make her smile.

An afternoon in June found him chuckling among the flower-beds, with an eye on the door through which she would soon emerge, for the sun was out at last. Cold rains had drowned most of his cherished plants, and it would take several days of coaxing to produce another blossom of sufficient excellence to present to her, but he had a plan for to-day.

There could be few secrets in such an establishment, and everybody knew the to-do caused by her simple request for books to read, and knew that she was now harassing Bedingfield for writing materials that she might address the Queen herself, instead of sending messages through him and the Council. Bedingfield, who feared to relax his discipline in the least, was in a quandary, and regarded every word of hers and every arrival at the Bull with unhappy suspicion. The old groom pottered with his trowel and watering-can, nursing his scheme.

The bleat of a half-grown billy-goat, which had been added to the establishment that morning and was tethered at the other end of the garden awaiting some obscure destiny in the ill-stocked farmyard, set him chortling while he dug and snipped at the weedy borders. "In good time," he murmured, nodding confidentially at the acquisition. "All in good time, my friend !"

She came just then, attended by two ladies-in-waiting, with Bedingfield looming in the rear. The day had turned off hot, and she wore white, her hair shining through the meshes of a small net cap. The old man knelt beside his tools at sight of her, his gnarled hands fumbling his shabby hat, his deep humility of mien enlivened by the knowing sidewise twinkle of his faded blue eyes.

She paused before him like an expectant child, waiting, since his hands held nothing for her, for the jest which never failed.

"Alas, your Grace," he murmured with a glance at Bedingfield who lounged at the threshold in conversation with two of his men, "the rains have left us nothing worth the plucking."

"But see what strange things have come up over night," she observed, eyeing the tethered goat which stood facing them, its embryonic beard wagging solemnly with the meditative motion of its jaws.

"I swear I did not plant it," he denied hastily, while her women made polite faces, and one of them raised a silver pomander to her

fastidious nose. "And I entreat your Grace to believe that I know nothing neither of its cultivation."

She advanced daintily along the path toward the goat, and it greeted her emotionally with a prolonged bleat. The lady with the pomander called out that goats always smelt, and begged her not to approach it—the other declared that it was a nuisance and must be removed at once. But Elizabeth went quite close to it and stood laughing at the ridiculous solemnity of the whole breed, while it looked back at her, chewing. When she turned away it sent after her another prolonged, and somehow derisive, bleat. She laughed again, and waved her hand to it coquettishly, stroked her own chin and strutted, and so passed on through the garden, her white skirts brushing the muddy growth at the side of the narrow paths.

She had played her part divinely to his purpose. The old man limped to the goat and untied it, while her back was turned. It refused to lead, so he scrummaged it up into his arms any which way, while it struggled in silent astonishment, and set off with it toward the house. Elizabeth's clear voice came after him.

"What are you doing, Wickham? Let the poor creature be, it did no harm where it was."

He paused outlandishly, the goat sagging and sliding down his hip with ineffectual kicks and a single falsetto protest. His face was abnormally sober, a subtle mixture of apprehension and outraged decorum.

"Nay, your Grace, I dare not leave it there," he said. "Nay, nay, 'tis as much as my place is worth to have it there now."

She came zigzagging toward him along the wandering paths.

"What nonsense is this? It cannot be smelt from the house, fool. Put it down at once. I have no objection to its being in the garden." She reached out to give its brief beard a gentle tweak, which set it kicking and bleating again in the old man's desperate clasp. "Who put it here? Why not let it stay?"

"Nay, your Grace—by St. Mary, I dare not let it stay."

"Where are you taking it, then—what sort of game is this?" She had begun to suspect something—he was too grave, too fearful, and too humble by far.

"To Sir Henry Bedingfield, if it please your Grace—and God willing," he added, getting a firmer hold on the squirming body under his arm.

"Is it a jest, Wickham? Do have a care," she warned him nervously, with a glance over her shoulder, for Bedingfield had been watching the group at the bottom of the garden and was now striding toward it with his most official mien. "He's cross to-day—don't vex him—he has had another letter from the Council, I think. Put the goat down, I say, and let it go."

"Ah, my lady, that I dare not do." His voice was nicely attuned to the approaching figure, so that the last words must be heard on the quiet air. "For how can I be sure that he is friendly to the Queen's cause, and all?"

"What's this—what's all this?" demanded Bedingfield, arriving.

The old man turned to face him, and hitched the now thoroughly indignant animal higher, ducking servilely at the same time, as both his hands were occupied.

"Sir, I cannot tell what he is, and that is my trouble. I pray you examine him at once, for I find him in the place where my lady's Grace is wont to walk, and what speech they may have had together and what secret intelligence exchanged I cannot tell, for I understand him not, myself, having small skill in languages, God knows, except some Flemish words to swear by, and he seems to me a stranger without credentials entirely, and forasmuch as I being the Queen's true subject——"

Elizabeth was shaking with inward laughter, while Sir Henry stood incredulous of his own shocked ears, though his neck had begun to redden—and old Wickham babbled on in all earnestness.

"—and I perceiving the strict charge committed to you, that no stranger should have access to her Grace without sufficient licence from yourself—and what this fellow is, I vow I cannot tell—therefore in the necessary discharge of my duty as your lordship has taught it to me, I thought best to bring the said stranger to you directly, to examine as you see cause—" And thereupon he set the goat down at Bedingfield's feet, where it began half sulkily, half in play, to nudge at the soldier's booted legs with its short horns.

Elizabeth's laughter broke bounds and rang heartily through the garden. She stood, one hand pressed to her slender side, and almost sobbed with merriment. It was not a very good joke, perhaps, but it was all she had, and she was grateful for it. Bedingfield glared a moment more, red in the face, and full of portentous dignity. Then with a snort he turned away.

"Very funny," he said, preserving his own gravity without effort. "Oh, very funny, no doubt! And now, having had your sport for the day, madam—perhaps it will please you to come into the house at once."

"Another quarter of an hour—I beseech you," she demurred. "It has been so long since I have seen the sun! Must you be always the jailer?"

"Madam, I beg you not to use so harsh a name," he replied with wounded hauteur. "Your Grace well knows that I am but one of your Grace's officers, appointed to serve you and to guard you——"

"From all such officers, the good Lord deliver me!" said Elizabeth piously, offended that he could not take a joke when it amused her.

He bowed. He was hurt. He did his best and she encouraged his inferiors to make game of him. It was less than his due.

"I shall await you at the door, madam," he said, and as he walked away the goat capered after him, stiff-legged, and was recaptured by old Wickham while Elizabeth laughed again.

When she returned to the house she made the quick amends her tempers and her rudeness always brought, and which shackled the hearts of her intimates forever. Her smile was sweet and something shy, her hand came out to rest a moment on the soldier's sleeve.

"Faith, I have little enough to laugh at these days," she murmured. "Never grudge me a joke, however poor a one it may seem."

"Madam," he replied stiffly, but feeling his resentment oozing away under the light touch of her hand, "I strive but to serve you diligently—you and the Queen."

"The Queen, ah, yes," she sighed. "The Queen first, my lord—and after, whatever scraps and crumbs of service may be left over—they come to me. Which is as it should be, mind you."

"Madam, my commission—" he stammered, wholly melted now. "My commission is from the Queen—but if, madam, it had come from yourself instead—as I grant it could not well have done," he floundered, wary even here of treasonable utterance, "but if, I say, my commission had come from any other source—though indeed, what source is there, under God, save the Queen—but if——"

"I know," she sighed. "I know. The Queen makes a shrewd choice of men to execute her commissions. If ever I wanted a prisoner straitly kept and hardly used—I should send, I am sure, for Sir Henry Bedingfield!"

"Madam, I protest I——"

"Lord, man, have done protesting, then, and let me pass! 'Tis no disgrace, God knows, to do one's duty well and faithfully—as you do!"

And she was gone, into the house, leaving him staring ruefully at the place on his sleeve where her hand had lain—so white and clean—so sweet a hand it was. He roused himself—the key clanked in the lock—and his heavy tread followed her to her chamber door. It was not their last quarrel, by far. But somehow, after that, the sting had gone.

II

Mary was at Richmond, counting days. Philip was at Corunna, awaiting a wind. Between them, shuttled the English ambassadors bringing Mary's good wishes and prayers for his safe voyage, and the Spanish hidalgos bringing gifts and jewels to Mary and her ladies. Midway hovered the English fleet, with Howard in command.

Parliament had dissolved in May after a loyal demonstration for the Queen, and seemed resigned at last to the marriage. There was still some trouble and plotting in the North, and people were still being pilloried in London for seditious rumours and murmurings, and the stinking bones of Wyatt's accomplices and followers still hung in public places as reminders of the loathsome end that traitors come to. Noailles was sulking in retirement, for his activities in the Wyatt business had almost occasioned a request for his recall, Gardiner maintaining that he had forfeited an ambassador's privileges and urging his arrest like any other conspirator. Mary was decidedly short with the culprit when he presented himself to make apologies and explanations. But the Council recommended patience,

dreading war. Courtenay had been sent to Fotheringay when Elizabeth was removed to Woodstock. It was now late June, and the way was cleared for Philip.

The harbour at Corunna was ablaze with streamers and pennons and gilded wood, with the imperial standard, thirty yards long, fluttering from the mast of *The Holy Ghost*, which was to bear him to England ; and sailors from the ships of the English escort elbowed sailors from the royal Spanish fleet in the sunny streets of the little seaside town.

Philip, among his dukes and grandes, his Spanish and Teuton guards and his three hundred personal servants dressed in the red-and-yellow livery of Aragon, surveyed the exotic scene without much enthusiasm. A cold, proud man of few intimacies, he was leaving all he had of affection and family ties behind him, in the de Osorio household at Valladolid. The Queen of England was a stranger, no longer young, ruling a nation of barbarians more than half heretic, a people altogether incomprehensible and untrustworthy so far as he could see.

He had been advised to have trained men-at-arms for even his domestic servants, always to wear a shirt of mail under his other garments, and to bring his own cook. And he must learn English, hating languages and hence not good at them, and must appear to enjoy foolish sports and contests because the English loved manly exercise. Spanish born, desk bred, with a love of detail and marginal notations amounting to clerkliness, he regarded the English pre-occupation with games and trials of strength as merely childish. He who liked sober dress must bedizen himself in gold embroidery and silver lace and tinkling ornaments—though he clung tenaciously to his black velvets even then—for the English admired display. He who was shy and unsmiling and reticent must bow and smirk and encourage the familiarities of an unceremonious people. And he who had such a difficult, discriminating eye for women, and no impulses at all, must wed this plain, middle-aged virgin who—they said—had conceived a passion for him. It would be embarrassing. He found a melancholy satisfaction in the utter self-sacrifice he must make. It was not a marriage but a campaign—a crusade.

And so, through all the banquets and bullfights and glittering spectacles which did him honour as he progressed slowly and unwillingly northward under the Castilian sun, from Valladolid on his way to that chilly, uncivilized island in the North Sea, he had preserved a smug and faintly melancholy expression of martyrdom very touching to behold. He had put this journey off as long as he could—while the Emperor became as fidgety at the delay as Mary in England—and now it had come upon him. Showering gifts and resignation as he rode, he reached Corunna, its harbour alive with the streamers and pennons of his marriage fleet. And there—he was not a good sailor—he tarried for a wind.

Elizabeth remained at Woodstock, not forgotten by the Council, who scowled and muttered over Bedingfield's endless correspondence ; such a conscientious man, Sir Henry ; so loyal to the Queen,

and mistrustful of his own shadow. Again the possibility of marrying her abroad was hopefully discussed, and again the Duke of Savoy was mentioned—that gallant soldier, still wifeless and landless, still fighting, still Philip's friend and the enemy of France. Noailles took alarm, and smuggled a message to her, warning her against accepting an alliance with a pauperized prince who was the Emperor's willing tool. Noailles had not learned Elizabeth yet. "*She is being so harshly treated,*" he wrote at the same time to the French king, "*that I am very much afraid she will submit if she can regain her liberty thereby.*" But to Elizabeth, wise and cool-headed and aloof, Savoy did not spell liberty. Besides, she had seen something of the unpopularity in England of a foreign marriage. She would not take the bait.

She had no interest, either, in a new name which had begun to be linked with hers—Lord Maltravers, Arundel's only son and heir. He was an accomplished, personable young man, and would make her a far better husband than Courtenay would have done. The enemies of Gardiner were said to sponsor the idea, and Arundel, like Howard, was now supporting her openly against the imperial enmity.

Meanwhile, she was not well. The same mysterious symptoms which had sent her to bed in January—the same whisperings of poison and fatal illness which had once before raised Renard's hopes. She would see no doctors but the ones she knew already, and neither Wendy nor Owen was free to come. Mary was sleeping badly and working herself into a state of nerves, tortured by suspense and excitement. They offered Elizabeth some doctors from Oxford nearby, and she indignantly refused to accept them. She would have her old friend Wendy or nobody. Therefore she went unattended.

Finally she bedevilled Bedingfield into allowing her to write to Mary. Her letter reached the Queen in the midst of the flurry of the Court's removal from Richmond to Farnham Castle, one of Gardiner's houses, nearer the south coast. Philip was expected to land at Southampton, if ever he could bring himself to sail, and Mary had decided to meet him half-way, instead of waiting in London for his ceremonious arrival.

People concealed knowing smiles, and recalled how her father had ever been impatient of his weddings. The Queen, they said, half-sick for love, could not even wait for her belated bridegroom to reach her side in the usual way. The Queen must set out, like a man, to meet her betrothed. But Mary did not care what they said. Philip was on the way at last. Gardiner, her Chancellor and her closest adviser, was Bishop of Winchester, which lay only a short ride from Southampton. What more fitting than that she should be married by Gardiner to Philip in Winchester? It was the oldest royal seat in England; an older, statelier town than London itself. Once kings had been crowned there. It was a place in every way suitable for the marriage of England's first maiden sovereign. . . . Thus poor Mary, unable to sit still at Richmond through these long, creeping summer days, with Philip so near as Corunna.

Into this immense preoccupation must come Elizabeth's letter, complaining of illness, complaining of captivity, harping on her injured innocence, entreating an interview with her sister, begging for the services of the doctors Mary wanted in attendance on herself. Mary thrust it aside impatiently. Later. Time enough for Elizabeth later. Elizabeth should stay where she was, out of sight, until the wedding was over. How if Philip should see her inexplicable popularity with the mob, rivalling their loyalty to the Queen? How if she smiled at him in that strange friendliness of hers, that modest-seeming, unassuming good-nature, to which men adhered like flies to treacle? Later, she and Philip must meet, no doubt. Not now.

Besides, the wedding dresses must be packed in their travelling boxes—orders must be given for the cleaning and sweetening of London before the entrance of Philip and the Queen together—the hanging corpses must come down, having served their gruesome purpose—the Cross in Cheapside was being regilded, against the coming of the bridegroom—provisions must be made for his state reception at Southampton—Arundel was to present the decoration of the Garter as soon as Philip's foot touched English soil—there was still the tremendous matter of Philip's separate coronation as King of England, to which the Council would not as yet consent—details of the wedding progress from Winchester to London must be arranged to his honour and comfort—there were ten thousand things to do, and Mary pecked at them all futilely, perversely, sleeplessly, driving everybody out of their wits—meanwhile removing to Farnham, a short morning's ride from Winchester.

So there was no time for Elizabeth—none whatever. Mary wrote impatiently to Bedingfield from Farnham, for it was his duty to see that Elizabeth was quiet and well-behaved during these trying days. “ . . . and our pleasure is that we shall not be hereafter molested any more with her disguised and colourable letters. . . .” Bedingfield sighed. He had known how it would be. And he was in no wise consoled by Elizabeth's bitter remark that, cut off from communication with the Queen or any hope of justice, as she was, she appeared to be in worse case than the meanest prisoner at Newgate, and she the Queen's own sister.

On a Friday afternoon, after a fair passage from Corunna, where the shore was packed with people who knelt in the sun and prayed for his safety and well-being, Philip dropped anchor in the middle of an English July. Southampton Water was alive with barges under a dull grey sky which threatened rain. The Queen's Tudor colours of apple-green and white did not warm the eye. The forts and ships round about the harbour belched a welcoming gunfire which shocked and distressed his unwarlike ears. Throughout the rest of the day Philip remained on board the *Espiritu Santo*, receiving visits from the English nobles and the imperial ambassadors; while Egmont, handsome, gracious, popular, already a welcome figure to the Queen, was dispatched at once to Farnham to inform her of Philip's arrival and good health.

The next day it rained. Surrounded by his English escort—Howard, Arundel, Pembroke, and the rest—with a background of Spanish grandees, Philip went ashore, knelt in the parish church, and passed on horseback through the gazing crowds, gaily dressed for his reception in spite of the weather, to the house which had been sumptuously furnished for him. Mary had thought out every detail ; its apartments were hung with the fine Flemish tapestries which had belonged to Henry VIII and Wolsey, its servants were dressed in his own livery of red and yellow, and there was even a chair of state in its improvised presence chamber. Underneath his habitual black velvet and gold chains and the short Spanish cape across one shoulder, Philip wore a shirt of fine mail—as recommended by his father the Emperor.

That same day, in the rain, Mary travelled from Farnham to Winchester in a red coach. There she would lodge in the Bishop's palace behind the Cathedral. Rooms were prepared for Philip in the Dean's house across the gardens—for of course Mary's maiden modesty would not allow him to sleep under the same roof before the marriage ceremony.

Almost the whole of the Privy Council was at Southampton to greet Philip and attend the feast which did him honour that evening. They found him unexpectedly affable and easy to please—but he was always bad at languages and had no English at his command—this slight, fair man with the mighty brow and hanging Hapsburg lip, his erect and princely bearing losing no fraction of his inconsiderable inches clothed in black velvet and silver, covered with jewels. He spoke to them in Latin or French, when driven to words, and listened politely with evasive, downcast eyes. And on the whole, they found themselves agreeably surprised.

Philip's native abstemiousness was outraged by the proportions of an English banquet ; but he drank their healths in English ale, which came as a terrible shock to a palate pampered by the soft light wines of the South ; and he made them a speech in Latin to the effect that he had come to live among them not as a foreigner but as a native Englishman, since God had called him to marry their virtuous sovereign, and he hoped his suite also would conform—whereupon the grandees all drank healths in ale too, and some of them were rather sick.

On Sunday he rose very late, and felt much the worse for the Southampton hospitality ; rose to find it still pouring with rain and as cold as only an English summer can be, while a howling wind drove through the narrow streets and whistled round the pointed gables. The scant three hundred houses of the little port were packed with English nobles and their families, who had come to do him homage by the Queen's command. Etiquette and the terms of the marriage treaty forbade the landing of the Spanish ships' companies which had brought him to England, and the men remained in cramped quarters on board, mutinous and muttering.

All day long drenched and gasping messengers arrived from the Queen at Winchester, bringing anxious queries as to his health, and

gifts of magnificent garments and horses caparisoned in velvet embroidered with gold and pearls—more messages fondly forbidding him to attempt the journey to her side until the weather abated—assurances of her patience and humility and good will—all day her solicitude inundated him. Even Gardiner was thrown to the weather, an unwilling sacrifice, to bear a ring from Mary and present his own respects as Chancellor.

In the late afternoon the sky brightened and cleared, and a watery sun looked out just before it sank. Philip sighed, and sent off his dearest friend, the smiling, tactful, imperturbable Gomez, with gifts of jewellery for Mary and her ladies, and a promise that he would surely come to Winchester to-morrow.

Monday dawned wetter and windier and colder than any day since he had landed. Philip stood at the window and gazed out at his adopted country. He was not a hasty man, unlike his father, but his very soul was dark with unuttered curses on the day that ever he left Valladolid—for this.

His baggage had gone forward in the morning, but he lingered till nearly two o'clock, in the hope that the weather would relent and allow him to traverse that last seven miles between Southampton and Winchester comfortably and arrive dry and with dignity. But at two he set out anyway, into the wind-driven downpour, riding a magnificent grey gelding provided for him by Mary. He wore black, as usual, sewn with diamonds and embroidered with gold, and was wrapped in a red felt cloak which was immediately soaked through. He was surrounded by his Spanish hidalgos, muffled and miserable, and an English bodyguard in the Spanish colours.

Soon the Spanish velvets and plumes were spattered with the white chalk mud of the coast roads, and the jaunty white feather in Philip's big beaver hat hung limp and ludicrous. A halt had to be made at the Hospital of St. Cross, in order that he might change to dry clothes for the state entry. And then he pushed doggedly on, riding the white horse also sent him by the Queen, to where at the gates of the old town a wretched group of wet aldermen and dignitaries clustered round the mayor in their best clothes—all spoilt, those splendid silks and velvets and curled feathers—all sodden and sad in the tactless English weather.

A dripping rabble of townsfolk gathered to see him pass, and there was more deafening gunfire as he was conducted to the Cathedral, where Gardiner and five other bishops awaited him in full pontificals. It was six o'clock when he reached its shelter, and the long, lovely aisles were awinkle with candles, and the choir swelled magnificently on *Laus honor et virtus*. He stopped, shivering in his wet clothes, with stifled sneezes all about him, to hear the *Te Deum*, and then was led by torchlight through the cloisters lined with the Queen's guards to his lodging in the Dean's house. The lights of the Bishop's palace, where Mary was, were tenderly pointed out to him on the way.

So at long last he reached a fire and his own snug rooms, and a hot draught and a dry warm house-robe out of his boxes. They

brought him supper, and he toasted his shins in a big chair by the hearth, with Egmont and Gomez and a few others of his suite, all very cheerful and encouraging—except about the ale—and just as he was turning his comfortable thoughts toward the great plump bed which awaited him, the Earl of Arundel arrived from the Bishop's palace. He brought a message from the Queen that she would be pleased to see his Highness privately when he had supped and rested.

It was all of ten o'clock.

Philip rose and bowed and thanked them, and retired to change his clothes once more, avoiding the humorous sidelong glances of Egmont as he passed. The Queen was impatient to see him—he sighed, as he inserted himself carefully into a white kid doublet, gold-embroidered, and chilly white silk hose—and Egmont, most brazenly, thought it funny. Well, perhaps it was—to Egmont. Philip stood passively while his magnificent sword was girdled around him. Egmont was not the bridegroom—the sacrifice, thought Philip bitterly, eyeing himself in the great polished steel mirror which faced him. His cold fastidiousness shied at this eagerness of the Queen's. He had begun to think of her as a monster of passionate indelicacy—like her father, he supposed—a voluptuous nature, long denied. . . . And wincing a little, raising his eyebrows at his own reflection, with a small, squamish shrug he turned and joined the smiling escort which awaited him in the outer room.

The rain had slackened to a thick mist, and the eaves still dripped; and as Arundel led the way across a little green and through a garden gate and along sweet, damp paths, the tree shadows were mysterious with the delicate patter of tiny drops from the laden leaves, and the moat shimmered black and quiet in the torchlight.

Thus, with Egmont and Gomez and others at his heels in the whispering dark, he reached a back door which gave on a narrow winding stair. This, someone told him in a discreet murmur, led to the Queen's private apartments. Again he was conscious of that small, fastidious recoil. It irked him to be conducted to his future wife, and she a queen, like any gay gallant about the Court, stealing to an assignation.

A door was flung open at the top of the stair as he mounted and he emerged into a long gallery, tapestry-hung, lighted brightly by torches instead of candles. At its far end was a short, thin, pacing figure which halted as if stricken, peering near-sightedly toward the stir his entrance made. Blinking in the torchlight, he recognized the Queen of England.

She wore black velvet, high in the neck, with a petticoat of frosted silver, and a coif of black velvet and gold. A person less blowsy, less the overblown doxy daughter of Henry Tudor whom Philip had anticipated could hardly be imagined. For an instant he hung there on one foot, uncertain, ungallant, speechless and blinking—and felt Egmont's perfumed slenderness brush past him, heard Egmont's suave voice saying all the proper things, saw

Egmont's shadow bow and bowed likewise. Mary approached him rapidly in a frou-frou of hidden satins. With a gracious gesture of affection and submission, she kissed her own hand before she offered it to him. And Philip, gripping her feverish fingers in his own clammy ones, bent forward and kissed her gallantly on the lips.

Her hot fingers clung. She led him by the hand to a chair beside hers under the canopy of state, and spoke to him haltingly in French. He answered in Spanish—did she not know Spanish? But she was shy of her mother's half-forgotten tongue before Philip, who spoke it like a true Spaniard. She explained—in French—that she had not spoken Spanish for more than twenty years. He explained—in Spanish—that his French was not very good. And so the bi-lingual conversation went on, quite happily, among such safe topics as the recent inclement weather, and the climate of Castile, and the sort of crossing he had had, and his father's health—not good—when last heard of.

Then the Spanish grandes who had accompanied him must advance to kiss the Queen's hand, and Philip must be presented to the ladies who attended Mary, each of whom he kissed soundly on the mouth as he understood the English custom to be, noticing at the same time that none of them seemed very pretty.

Gardiner was present, of course, Lord William Howard, and many others. When Philip had done his duty by the curtsying maids-of-honour, and exchanged civilities with the English lords, and the night wore on, he suggested retiring. But Mary led him back to the chairs under the canopy, her fingers tremulous in his, and the talk limped on between them.

She knew that he was tired, and had been wet and cold. But surely he was as comfortable here as anywhere, with a fire burning at each end of the gallery, extravagantly, because it was so warm in Spain. To Mary midnight was very early—and surely he was well enough, here in this easy chair beside her, where her eyes could see him, her ears could delight in his quiet, slow foreign voice. He had come at last—her Philip—and he was young and slender and royal in his bearing—her Philip—and she could not bear to lose sight of him just yet, though his eyelids drooped with a frank desire for sleep, and his attention plainly wandered—no doubt because of the fire, and supper, after riding in the wind—poor Philip, such a wet day—but he was here now—at last—and her long loneliness was at an end. . . .

The Spaniards winked and nodded at each other, and they said things behind their hands to the English maids, who understood the meaning if not the words, and tittered—the Queen had fallen in love at first sight, they said. The flush was on her cheeks, as it had been the day she entered London for the first time as Queen—it made her younger, and healthier, to-night—and the Spaniards, who had somewhat pitied Philip, began to feel that perhaps he was not so badly off. As for themselves—well, the English maids were not very young or very pretty, and they wore their virtue like a

mask. It looked like dull days ahead, to Egmont and Gomez and the rest, in this chill exile from Spain.

When Philip rose to take his leave, Mary stood also, and caught at his sleeve—and uttered suddenly, in a breathless rush of childhood Spanish, her simple thanks to him for accepting so gracefully so old and ugly a bride. Philip paused, surprised, a little touched, and a half-smile softened his melancholy face as he looked down at her. He was not tall, but neither was she. He found her, for all her febrile excitement at this first interview, very different from anything he had expected her to be—a little woman, sallow and embarrassingly humble—he said something kind and futile, and backed away.

She stood watching his gracious progress down the long room from her to the door that gave on the dark, winding stair, and drew a slow, happy breath. He was as kind as though she had been young and beautiful. . . .

They were married two days later in the Cathedral—it was the festival of St. James, patron saint of Spain. The Queen's ring, by her own choice, was a simple hoop of gold like any other maid's.

III

“ Oh, Fortune ! how thy restless, wavering state
 Hath fraught with cares my troubled wit,
 Witness this present prison whither fate
 Couldst bear me, and the joys I quit.
 Thou caus'dst the guilty to be loosed,
 From bonds wherein are innocents enclosed,
 Causing the guiltless to be strait reserved,
 And freeing those that death had well deserved ;
 But by her envy can be nothing wrought,
 So God send to my foes all they have brought.”

“ Faith, and 'tis a most pious prayer your Grace hath writ !
 And may God grant it, say I ! ”

Elizabeth turned, still scowling, to find old Wickham at her shoulder, his cap in one hand and a spray of late foxglove in the other.

“ No prayer, Wickham—say a curse, rather—a curse straight from my wicked soul ! ” And she tossed from her into the garden path the bit of charcoal which had blacked her finger-tips as she scribbled those idle, rhyming words on the unpainted boards of a new shutter, constructed only that morning by the carpenters and not yet hung in place when the workmen departed for the day—as they must always do when her Grace came out to walk in the afternoon sunshine.

Repairs were going forward at Woodstock ; the new leads to the roof and the mending of casements and shutters which Bedingfield had been soliciting since July. It was now October and they had

just begun. The house was far from fit to winter in, but he had dared do nothing without the consent of the Council, and besides, his credit was exhausted with the countryfolk. He owed for his men's victualling, and supported them from day to day out of his own pocket, as their pay was so much in arrears that they could not buy food for themselves.

Mary and Philip were at Hampton Court, in mourning for the old Duke of Norfolk, whose death had interrupted the nuptial festivities in London. The gates of the Palace were closed and the Queen would see nobody, but people said her jealous seclusion was not so much grief for a revered friend as love of a new husband whom she could not bear to have out of her sight. The Court seemed to have settled down to amicable relationships between the English and the few remaining Spaniards in Philip's personal train ; but there were street brawls in town, murders and attendant hangings and reprisals, small religious riots, and much gossip amounting to slander regarding the Queen and her marriage.

News filtered through to Elizabeth in Oxfordshire. Parry was getting old these days, getting stout and short of breath—but he still found things out, heaven knew how, and sent word to her of what happened in the world, by the usher lad who lay at the Bull each night because there was no room for him in the narrow quarters of the gate-house.

Thus Elizabeth had heard how when Mary went north from Winchester to Whitehall at the end of July, Philip had ridden beside her litter, seeming the most devoted of husbands ; and how the London crowds had gathered silent and watchful under the thunder of the Tower guns' salute. The populace was still wary of a Spanish conquest, still feared that Philip meant to import mercenary troops and install the Inquisition in England—though all his men-at-arms and most of his servants had been sent back to Spain with the wedding fleet, and he was making a point of being waited on by Englishmen, to the jealousy of his remaining attendants from Spain, who felt that he stooped to curry favour with the islanders. She had heard, too, that Philip used his wealth royally in largesse to the poor and gifts to the Queen and her ladies, long inured to a pitiful economy in the midst of a regal setting. But at the same time he had introduced a Spanish rigidity of etiquette at Court, and the guarded gates and closed doors and officious flunkeys irked a free people who were accustomed to have their sovereign accessible to personal petitions. Pole was returning at last, as the Emperor had no further excuse for detaining him now that the disputed marriage was accomplished. Robert Dudley had been released from the Tower, along with his brother, and was at Court ; Philip had taken a fancy to him, called him "*un mancebo gallardo*," and attached him to his personal suite ; his wife was in the country, as usual. In spite of malicious rumours that Philip had already begun to chafe at his English bonds, Mary seemed blessed and happy after all those stormy years—and before long England was buzzing with the story that she would bear a child in the spring.

It was this last straw that had set Elizabeth brooding, scowling, scribbling her black, rhyming curse in charcoal on the smooth board in the sun against a south wall of her tumble-down prison. The Queen's child, coming between herself and the throne at this eleventh hour of her anxious waiting—the Queen's child, and if it were a prince, robbing the Queen's sister forever of her precious heritage, outliving her, perhaps, outlasting her with children of its own—the Queen's child, half Spanish, wholly Catholic, condemning England, dear, green, foggy, Protestant England to the French wars and the dreadful *auto-da-fé*.

And was she then to be always a captive, pliant, conforming, obedient, feigning Papist zeal in order just to go on living in some sort of peace and comparative safety? Suppose Mary died—for she was nearly forty and had never been strong, and the child might easily kill her—suppose Mary died and left a new-born Catholic heir, with Spanish Philip in possession? What would become of her—Elizabeth—then? And what of England? Why, Philip could make himself King—England would become an imperial province, like the wretched Netherlands, under a Hapsburg regent. England would cease to be—as England—if Mary died in the spring!

Heedless of the anxious, puckered eyes of the old man who stood holding his forgotten flower, Elizabeth sat down limply on a wobbly saw-horse among the carpenters' chips and tools, and covered her face with her hands, pushing slim, smudged fingers against her thin temples. *God send to my foes all they have brought.* Ah, but Mary was no foe of hers—poor Mary—she had had no choice, ever, and now she would have less than before; poor Mary, carrying the child of the unloving husband she adored, believing she carried the salvation of England. Anyone in Mary's place could have no choice. And indeed it was something, was it not, to bear a child....

"God knows, and I would feel the same toward me—" she moaned between her hands.

"Mistress—?" he quavered, for he was used to see her laughing and brave, or at least defiant—and this slender, bowed, despairing figure shocked and frightened him. There was no answer. He bent, peering fearfully at her concealing fingers—she made no sound of weeping—he had never thought to see her cry. One gnarled hand came out to her—his cap was in it—the other held his foxglove, a last cherished bloom from the shelter near the summer-house. Very cautiously he laid its cool lavender bells against her hand, drew them along it toward her wrist encircled by its crisp lawn ruffle. She raised her head and looked at him, dry-eyed, her lovely mouth pinched and drawn in the hard autumn sunlight. "'Tis the last stalk this season, your Grace," he remarked inadequately, and the lavender bells trembled against her wrist.

She cupped them in her two hands tenderly, but without really seeing them, for her eyes never left his troubled face.

"Ah, well," she said dully, "we are like to be here when they bloom again—still here—or in a worse place."

"Your Grace—may God forbid—!"

"God?" she repeated gently, with blank, dry eyes. "God gives the Queen a child."

She rose and pulled her cloak about her, for even in the sun the air was frosty. Then she paused, and he followed the direction of her gaze.

A milkmaid came striding along the path from the overgrown park where the cows grazed, with heavy pails hanging either side from the yoke across her shoulders. She was young and lusty, broad in the throat and browned with the summer sun, and as she came she sang. One of the farm lads strolled to meet her, a hay-rake in his hand, and they moved on together, he making no offer to relieve her of her customary burden, she still singing as they fell into step.

Elizabeth watched until a corner of the house hid them from view. Then she sighed.

"And hers is a happier lot than mine, at that," she said. "Who would be a princess nowadays?"

But in her heart she knew of one, at least, who would not be other than the daughter of a king—if it were not for Mary's child.

Winter closed down, cold and dismal, on Woodstock. Bitter winds rattled the mended shutters and whistled down the badly bricked chimneys, whirling smoke out into the draughty rooms. Elizabeth addressed another letter to the Queen, asking to be allowed to return to one of her own houses where food would be easier to come by, and a rain-proof roof and plenty of fuel could be had. Mary replied through the Council that she would consider. Which meant, no doubt, that she would ask Philip. Meanwhile, Elizabeth could shiver.

Mary was ill and anxious, for Philip was slipping away from her day by day; longing for his native Spain, perhaps lonely for that household at Valladolid where the Doña Isabella dwelt. And the more Mary clung to him and tried to please, the more eagerly she recounted all her hopeful symptoms, and discussed with him the appointments, ceremonies, titles, and future of their babe, the less he seemed to listen.

She was at a loss to know how she had estranged him, since those first few days when he had been so conspicuously kind and courtly, and the ambassadors had smiled, and Howard made his broad jokes. What had she done—or not done? To be sure, Parliament would not consent to his separate coronation as King of England—but was she to blame for that? And surely she was not much older, not much plainer, than when he saw her first. Yet he had turned from her. She tortured herself with wondering why, and never guessed so simple a reason as just the gradual waning of his crusader's zeal and his good resolutions. He had been on his best behaviour in July. This was December.

Reginald Pole, too, had somehow failed her. After travelling by easy stages in a litter to a ceremonious welcome at Whitehall, he had gone into retirement at Lambeth Palace, whence Cranmer had gone forth to the Tower a year before. Cecil had been among the dis-

tinguished escort which Mary sent to the Continent to fetch home her exiled kinsman, and the populace greeted Pole warmly for his family's wrongs. He was ailing and elderly, with a full, greying beard, and had lost most of his English after twenty years abroad. Philip had very little Italian, which made conversation difficult between the three of them as they discussed at great length the return of England to the Roman fold. Pole still felt, and tactfully refrained from saying so even while his manner implied it, that it had been more dignified if Mary had not married at her age. He was sure they would have had no need of Philip, and could have accomplished the salvation of England without him. And his celibate churchman's soul averted his eyes from her obvious enslavement to this slight young man with the Spanish lisp.

Mary resisted with all her characteristic loyalty a faint chill of disappointment. He was shockingly changed from the young ascetic whose image she had carried in her secret thoughts all those long years till Philip came to eclipse every other tenderness entirely. Pole was too distant, too preoccupied and inhuman—too unaware. All he cared about was the Church—though of course she cared about that passionately too—and about England's salvation. But he had forgotten everything else, even her mother, even his, and the good fight they had all made together against the Divorce. There was no warmth in him, no nourishment, no reminiscence, no anything to comfort her. She would never admit it, but she was disappointed. Her Philip, with all his rudeness and his moods, was at least a man.

As though things were not bad enough, the problem of what to do about Elizabeth kept intruding. Philip began to ask questions about her. He thought she ought to be married. Mary explained irritably that Elizabeth had no desire to marry. He thought that anyway she might be sent to the Continent in the protection of his aunt. Mary said that Elizabeth did not wish to leave England. Philip raised his eyebrows. Did it matter what Elizabeth wished? Mary, surprised and resentful at her own convictions, admitted that it did. Besides, Philip must realize that the people would support their darling against any attempt to force her into some more or less honourable exile abroad. It would mean another row—perhaps an uprising—certainly some opposition in Parliament. Mary was too ill to want anything like that now. Let Elizabeth stay where she was—let things take their course—only let the Queen alone, in this new pain and terror of child-bearing.

Elizabeth, huddling close to the smoky fires at Woodstock, knew pretty well what was going on. They still spoke of the Earl of Arundel's son as a possible match for her. But that would be the Courtenay business all over again. She knew better than that. Gardiner's enemies were at the bottom of it. And when at the end of the year the Duke of Savoy himself arrived in London, she prepared to do battle once more for her bare right to live at home in England, and retain her cherished maiden state. Savoy was Philip's choice. What did she want with a poverty-stricken de-

pendent of the Emperor? True, he was a very gallant gentleman—young enough—handsome enough, they said, in a weatherbeaten way—every inch a soldier and a man as well as a prince. She sighed. Not the worst possible fate for somebody—but what did she want with all that?

Once more she contemplated coolly her last line of defence—better death than exile now from England. And the alternative looked less improbable these days than four years ago when Denmark loomed, and she had first determined on that ultimate gamble. Death had come very near her since then. But she straightened. All or nothing. Besides, they would never dare . . .

Once again she held her fire, keeping in reserve that last defiance which must not come until everything else had been tried, and they had got her back against the wall and a contract to be signed. No contract appeared. And after witnessing the most elaborate Christmas festivities the English Court had known for years, Savoy went away again, the richer for a loan from Philip to pay his beleaguered garrisons in France, but still without a bride.

IV

Philip wanted to go home.

Things were not at all as he had expected in some ways. He saw no prospect of being crowned King, thanks to his wife's hostile Parliament, not all of whom could be bought. He was not allowed to rule England, except indirectly, by his influence with the Queen which remained undiminished, to the disgust of the English. He was not asked to sign things and make lists and draw up plans, as he so loved to do.

Mary allowed and even encouraged her bishops to take the most drastic steps against heresy, of course, in her effort to please a husband who at least acquiesced in the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition. The ceremony of England's solemn reunion with Rome had taken place at St. Paul's in December, with Pole officiating ; and early in 1555 the Smithfield burnings began.

But Philip was bored and idle and fractious, and the English maids-of-honour were of a frigid virtue most unflattering. The Queen—well, the Queen was over-fond. Moreover, there began to be some doubt about the possibility of a child. He sent for Renard, and announced that he was going home—for a visit.

Renard was aghast. What would the French say? They had their Mary Stuart, who was the Queen's only Catholic heir unless . . . Philip had lost faith in Mary's repeatedly postponed hopes and said so bluntly. All the more reason, argued Renard, for Philip to remain in England, for if no child was going to be born to Mary in the spring Elizabeth was still by Henry's will the heir presumptive, and in her hands England was sure to become Protestant again. It was madness, said Renard, for Philip to think of quitting his post in England now, with all these rumours ripe about the Queen;

leaving Elizabeth without a husband (such as Savoy) to control her ; with Howard admiral of the fleet and openly taking her part against the Queen ; with the Council full of sedition and the Crown in debt ; and worst of all, with this new severity against the heretics, these burnings at the stake and other summary measures which the English people would never take meekly, and for which they were only too ready to blame the Spanish influence at Court instead of the English bishops under Gardiner. There was going to be trouble, prophesied Renard, and Philip must be there. At least he must have the common magnanimity to remain for the Queen's expected delivery in the late spring. Else what would people say ? Particularly the French.

Philip reflected. The heir presumptive again. Why all this fuss, he demanded peevishly, about a bastard wench barely twenty years old whose claim to the throne rested on an illegal act of her father's time-serving parliament ? Renard cast down his eyes and shrugged ; easy enough to use language—but the Queen's sister meant to rule, and she had the good will of the people. The people ? Philip did not understand. He had never bothered about the people. It was like them to idolize the girl, of course, because she was young and no doubt considered herself abused when she was kept out of mischief, but—was she beautiful ? Renard shrugged. Did she resemble the Queen—did she inherit her mother's light disposition—or her father's statesmanship—was she not sincere in her profession of Catholicism—and above all, why was she so feared and so beloved ? Renard shrugged and smiled, and his eyes were evasive ; *c'était un esprit plein d'incantation* ; perhaps his Highness had better see for himself. . . .

Philip pondered. Suppose the Queen died, as she seemed likely to do soon, child or no. And suppose he was left, a Spaniard, a Catholic, with a handful of discontented countrymen, here in England where no one liked him very much ? Suppose Mary died this spring and the Protestant party made Elizabeth Queen—where would he be then ? Howard, Arundel, Cecil, Pembroke—all Elizabeth's friends. Even Paget, out of his spite to Gardiner. Gardiner would stand by him, Philip supposed, but what would Gardiner's place be worth with Mary dead and the most powerful nobles in England all for Elizabeth ? Gardiner had been in the Tower before, and he would go back there, if the pendulum swung.

Philip contemplated in his slow, unexcitable way the prospect of Elizabeth, unmarried, on the throne of England. It would mean chaos. The whole world would come a-wooing, though she might take Arundel's son after all, to keep the country solcly in the jealous hands of Englishmen, who so hated foreigners. She would have to marry at once, if she came to the throne. Well, then, it must be Savoy, or someone like him, who could be depended on to keep her from a French alliance. It must be a Catholic, at least. Of course there was Philip's own son by his first wife—if only the boy had been ten years older—and, of course, with Mary dead, there would be himself. . . .

And why not? There would have to be a dispensation, for marriage with a dead wife's sister—but such things could always be arranged. The Pope would make no difficulty about this, in the interests of the Church. At least one ought to see her, and possibly bring some tactful pressure to bear about this match with Savoy, which was by far the best way out of the whole business. She would be lucky to get Savoy—any woman would be. She must be made to see that. Mary was too ill to deal with these matters now. He would attend to it himself. He would have the troublesome girl brought here, under his hand, anyway. And then, if anything happened to the Queen, he would have a hostage—or a friend. What was she like—this Elizabeth? Yes, he would see for himself.

Mary could refuse him nothing, except his freedom. And so the middle of April found Bedingfield gazing half in relief, half in apprehension, at a letter from the Queen. “ . . . And *forasmuch as we have resolved to have the Lady Elizabeth to repair nearer unto us, we do therefore pray and require you to declare unto her that our pleasure is she shall come to us to Hampton Court in your company with as much speed as you can have things in order for that purpose.* . . . ”

Elizabeth made ready with a trembling eagerness which cast out apprehension. Mary was ill and frightened and lonely—willing to be friends. Her precious Philip was only a man at a time like this—Elizabeth recalled those days at Chelsea, when Catherine had turned to her instead of the clumsy Thomas—Elizabeth knew how to make herself useful, well-nigh indispensable, she hoped, with her exquisite needlework and the small kindly services she had learned for Catherine—Mary would see what it was to have a sister, Philip, or no Philip. And if there was a baby and it lived . . . Elizabeth knew she could not hate a child, even if it robbed her of the throne.

She travelled through a mighty wind that twice blew her hood from her head, and her usher must walk beside her horse to hold her skirt about her ankles. After embarrassingly loyal demonstrations by the villages as she passed, they reached Hampton Court on the fourth day and entered through a back door, with no one to welcome them. The Queen was ill and could not see her.

Elizabeth found herself installed in a sumptuous apartment which had been recently vacated by one of Philip's grandes, and which was near his own suite of rooms. A few of her own servants waited on her, but Bedingfield's soldiers remained on guard and no visitors were allowed. She heard soon that Courtenay had left England only the day before for a voluntary exile on the Continent; and that Lord Maltravers was about to be or had just been married. That left Savoy.

After several days a message came from Mary. Elizabeth was to dress herself in her best clothes and prepare to receive the King.

She had been expecting almost anything but Philip. She dressed carefully, but with her usual noticeable simplicity. Her lack of fine jewels, the absence of fur or metallic embroidery on her dark gown, with its tight bodice over her flat young bosom and its modest V-shaped neckline and the pointed collar rolling back from

her small throat, the one good ring on her long white hand—all bespoke the retiring younger sister of royalty. Her well-brushed hair was swept back severely from her high, intelligent forehead ; but it waved in shining undulations to the edge of her cap. Her skin was clear and pale, except for the faint coral mouth. And her remarkable changing eyes were dark and watchful.

What did Philip want ? She knew that the marriage with Savoy was one of his dearest projects. That, and the persecution of heresy. Was this to be a private inquisition on her soul—or an ultimatum regarding some proposed husband ? Well, she could be as good a Catholic as anybody. But marry she would not.

And when he came, and bowed, and kissed her hand, and she swept him her deepest curtsy and murmured the proper things to greet her sister's husband—she saw that he was staring.

A wave of hysterical inward mirth swept through her. But how simple, how easy, this might prove to be ! She had feared him and dreaded to face him. And now his pale, slightly protruding stare exposed him as but another man after all. She thought she saw her way now. And she was not afraid of him any longer. So this was the great Philip, Prince of Spain, heir to the Holy Roman Empire. Poor Mary.

But her gaze as it rested on him was wide and guileless, and her speech was slow and soft to answer his halting queries, while her lips remained unsmiling to suit his own gravity. After some fumbling with French and Italian, they spoke mostly Latin. He asked about her journey from Woodstock, and her health—mentioned the inclement weather, gave her the latest news of the Queen, and shook his head sadly over his wife's condition. Nothing was said about Savoy, nor about the state of Elizabeth's soul. And presently, bowing, still grave, still staring, Philip withdrew.

Elizabeth sat down in the nearest chair and hid her silent laughter behind one slim, derisive hand. But it was not at Philip she was laughing—it was at herself for forgetting until he came that he might be but a man.

Within a few days Lord William Howard came to see her, with the Queen's permission, and bestowed on her a mighty avuncular hug, and pinched her pale cheek, and vowed that the country air had agreed with her ; and they laughed, and understood each other, as always. She even told him, with demureness amounting to drollery, that brother Philip had paid her a visit and—was very pleasant. Whereat Lord William winked at her, and she pretended not to see ; and when he roared with laughter she pretended that she blushed.

It was all very merry and heartening, after so much anxiety. Her spirits rose until she felt a little giddy. Not even a visit from Gardiner, shouting and bullying as usual, could very much depress her. They went over all the same ground again. Again he implored her in the Queen's name to confess a guilt she would not own, and warned her angrily that she would never be set at liberty until she changed her tune.

"My lord, I had as lief lie in prison all my life for the truth as to go free and be suspected by her Majesty," said Elizabeth grandly, and Gardiner stamped away in a fury.

For a week nothing happened and no one came near her. Things began to look less bright. She begged an audience of the Queen and was refused. She thought of Philip, and her mouth twisted into a small fastidious *moue*. Philip was a last resort. She was not reduced to Philip yet. Something told her it would be hard to head Philip off if once he started in the wrong direction. Something told her, too, that if she chose to go about it in the right way she could have almost anything she liked from him.

And then one night at ten o'clock Bedingfield appeared at her door, long-faced, with a summons from the Queen.

V

She was right to guess that Mary was ready to forgive her for the sake of her company, at a time when Philip was no better than any other stranger. Mary wanted Elizabeth's vitality and ready affection to lean on—wanted someone who would call her sister, and who could talk of old friends and other days, to pass the long, sleepless hours of apprehension and pain. But also Mary had hoped that to save the Queen's face Elizabeth would beg her pardon at last, and allow her the gesture of royal magnanimity.

She might have known that Elizabeth would never appeal. Elizabeth craved no mercy, as Gardiner had reported with chagrin, but only judges to try her. Mary had sighed and wept and raged, and tried to stand upon her dignity. But the nights were hideous and the days were endless, and Philip was always somewhere else.

When the summons came, and Bedingfield was so visibly shaken by it, Elizabeth had lost her first confidence and did not know it was Mary's surrender. A year and a half had passed since they parted with that kiss of peace at Whitehall. Since then she had had cause to wonder several times if Mary meant to take her life. She tried to tell herself now that the lateness of the hour and the suddenness of the command meant nothing—day and night were alike to Mary, or had been in the old days—she never slept well—but the two weeks of suspense since her arrival at Hampton Court had told on Elizabeth's nerves, and she shivered as she waited for the cloak which Bedingfield requested her to wear.

She followed him down chilly corridors which held terrifying shadows in the torchlight, across a dark corner of the garden where her heart beat quickly with the silly notion of a hired dagger-thrust from behind, and in at another door where the burnt-out brazier struck an ominous glint from the armour of a sentry at the foot of the grand staircase. This was Philip's work, she thought, her ears straining after the whispered password—the sovereigns of England had had no such dread of assassination in her father's day, when doors stood open into the courtyards and grooms snored sweetly

in corners. A halberd butt thumped on the bare floor and she hurried on, after the clink of Bedingfield's spurs, past the chapel and along the south gallery—she knew where she was now. One of the Queen's women met them at a half-open door, and Bedingfield turned back.

The room was but dimly lighted with a few candles. Mary sat alone in a great chair of state, huddled and wan and old, her hands folded across her body as though to protect it from unfriendly eyes. She said nothing as Elizabeth approached her slowly across the carpet—merely sat looking at her steadily, as though from a great distance, waiting.

In the moment before she slipped to her knees, Elizabeth saw the Queen aged beyond belief, pitiable, and hopelessly lonely. Her quick sympathy welled up in real tears—she was overwrought on her own account, and Mary's air of judgment added to the tension—but at the same time she wondered at daring to be sorry for Mary to her very face. On her knees she stammered out a prayer that the Queen might continue in good health and safety, and added as a sort of postscript to the petition another that the Queen might also be brought to a speedy realization of the loyalty and affection of the truest subject in the land—her humble sister.

"Still the same story," said Mary frctfully. "You will not confess like an honest penitent—no, not you!"

"I have no offence against your Majesty to confess—and if that be not the truth as God hears me, then I request ncither favour nor pardon at your Majesty's hands!" The tone was sadly at variance with the humility of her position, kneeling at the Queen's feet.

"Very pretty," Mary sneered provocatively. "And so you consider yourself wrongfully and unjustly punished."

"I cannot say that to your Majesty," replied Elizabeth with a studied meekness which Mary found more infuriating than any impudence she had expected.

"Ay, but to others you will say so freely enough!" she gibed.

"Never, if it please your Majesty—" Elizabeth maintained her pose of exaggerated submission, eyes downcast. "I have borne the burden of your Majesty's displeasure without complaint, and must bear it while your Majesty wills. But I beseech your Majesty to think of me but as your true subject and most loving sister—not only from the beginning until now, but forever, as long as my life shall last."

"Ah, well—we can hope so," said Mary grudgingly.

But at a note of wistful relenting in the ungracious words Elizabeth looked up hopefully—their eyes met—and Mary held out her hand. The formalities were over.

They sat for a long time after that, Elizabeth on the floor beside the Queen's chair, holding that ugly, feverish hand in both her long cool ones, while they talked quietly of homely, unimportant things; and of Catherine and the bad times she had had, and of Edward when he was small—until at last the Queen relaxed against the back of the chair with a long sigh.

" You are tired, sister," said Elizabeth gently, and got to her feet. " I have stayed too long with my chatter. But indeed, 'tis good to be together again—good to me, at least. Ah, Mary, let us be friends again—as we once were ! "

" If only you had—" Mary began, but Elizabeth laid a quick, caressing hand along the Queen's cheek in a half-forgotten gesture of her affectionate childhood.

" Nay, never trouble to answer me now—see, how late it is—you must go to bed and rest—try to sleep, do try—'twill be best for the babe. Good night—and God bless you—both."

" Wait," said Mary hoarsely as Elizabeth backed away from her toward the door. " Come back. Come here. Give me your hand again—there." And she placed on the same slim finger where it hung too loose that ring she had bestowed once before and since denied. For a moment she held their two hands locked together, and seemed to try to speak. Then she pushed Elizabeth away almost roughly, and rose with the dragging movements of the very old. " Now you may go," she said. " Leave me in peace—and send that woman here to me—I have done enough for one day, God knows."

She turned her back to end the interview, and went on muttering, to herself, in Spanish. As Elizabeth rose from her last deep curtsy at the door, she thought the tapestry behind the great chair moved, and then hung oddly ; or was it just a trick of the dim candlelight ? Since when did the Queen speak Spanish to herself ? And yet why should Philip—if it was Philip—stoop to eavesdrop on the English speech between the Queen and her sister ?

Bedingfield was waiting outside the ante-room, and they passed in silence through the darkness back to her own chamber. On the whole she was satisfied and reassured. Mary was wretched and wanted to be kind. She had only to be careful now—careful and humble and cheerful, in these trying days.

Within a week Bedingfield was relieved of his guard duty, with all his soldiers. He and Elizabeth parted friends. She moved freely about the state apartments after that, saluted ceremoniously by Philip and Reginald Pole if they chanced to meet. She avoided Philip, with the most scrupulous politeness, for it became obvious that he meant her to like him—either a deep strategy or an admission of weakness, and either one made her cautious. Pole was cold to her modest advances, for he doubted the sincerity of her conversion always.

Soon a small court had formed about her, while Lord William Howard swelled with pride and made himself a sort of unofficial Lord Chamberlain to his niece the Princess. Old friends swarmed to congratulate her. Cecil came up from his garden at Wimbledon, quiet and serious-minded and impersonal as ever, but genuinely pleased that all her danger seemed safely past. Arundel attached himself to her openly as an admiring slave. One face she missed, and made discreet inquiries ; Robert Dudley was abroad in Philip's service, a favourite messenger nowadays because he was not too lazy to ride post, whatever the weather.

So summer came, bringing to Elizabeth an intoxicating sense of security she had not known for years. Mary kept her chamber, moping, jealous of Philip's wilful absences from her side. There were several false alarms about the birth, and also a wild story that the Queen was dead and Philip kept it secret. The weather was wet and cold, and the grain could not ripen, and food would be dear during the coming winter. Already the poor had begun to suffer.

At last, with the cradle waiting and the midwives and nurses and princely household assembled for the birth, it began to be whispered that the doctors had lied and hoped and juggled dates as long as the perilous pretence could be kept up—and that it was not a child which ailed the Queen, nor ever would be—and that some foundling would be substituted as the heir of England at the time of the Queen's supposed delivery. And the more the physicians gently argued and painstakingly explained, the more pitifully convinced Mary became that they had miscalculated only—and that older, sicklier women than she had borne healthy babes before now—and that surely, before very long, they would see that she too could have a child.

Parry brought the news of the Queen's ultimate disappointment—it was so sure at last—and he was puffing a little in his eagerness, bright-eyed, too jubilant for tact, knowing well what it meant to his adored princess. Elizabeth heard him with a long, slow breath like the involuntary sigh when pain abates. No child—why, then. . . . But Parry's fat triumphant countenance offended her good taste, and she dismissed him ungratefully with a sharp rebuke. Ah, yes, it was shameful, to be so glad when Mary's heart was breaking. But—no child. . . .

Meanwhile the Emperor's health was failing fast, and he wrote of his longing to see his son once more. Philip seized on this excuse for escape. Mary wept and wrung her hands and alternately reproached and implored him, till he was thoroughly sickened of scenes. He explained that apart from sentimental ties he and his father had business to discuss—matters of Empire. He promised that he would be gone only a little while, and would leave his retinue in England as a guarantee of his speedy return. He even promised to come back to England before the year was out. But Mary knew what it meant. Philip too had given up all hope that she could have a child.

Philip's sense of duty, however great, had begun to wear too thin to uphold him in this futile self-sacrifice. By midsummer his preparations for departure had been made, and Charles was waiting at Brussels to see him. Mary's health had greatly improved under the ministrations of the new Irish doctor who had dispelled the myth of her pregnancy with a proper diagnosis, and she was able to accompany Philip in a litter in the state procession from Hampton Court to Whitehall late in August, and thence to Greenwich, where a boat was waiting.

The populace ran to the roadsides to see them pass, to reassure themselves that the Queen was still alive and Philip was really going. But there were murmurings beneath the cheers, for they had

expected to see Elizabeth too. The story got round that she had been sent by way of the River, in a shabby barge, poorly attended, lest her popularity overshadow the Queen's; a precaution neither tactful nor wise. They loved her, they liked to look at her red hair and her laughter—for surely she would laugh with them again, now that she was no longer a prisoner?—and keeping her in the background was no way to make them forget her.

But as Philip's boat slid away on the tide, only a year and a month after he had first come to England, Elizabeth stood at a window of Greenwich Palace, her arm around the Queen's waist, her slender strength shaken by the Queen's uncontrollable sobs. Philip stood up in the stern and waved his hat, though Mary could not see him for tears and nearsightedness. And at last she sank down beside the window in a very ecstasy of lamentation.

Elizabeth knelt beside her, petting her, crooning foolish, useless words, promising futile things—while Mary clung to her, her cap awry, and blubbered.

"He will not come back—not ever—I shall be shamed before all the world—a deserted wife—he never loved me, God knows—and I shall never see him again——"

"There, there, sister—he will come back, he said he would—and before Christmas, too, as he promised—and there is always Robert, until then, to bring you word of him, and take back letters from you in no time at all—Philip will write soon—you will see how he loves you——"

"No, no, it is the child—I have failed him with the child—why should he return to a woman who cannot give him heirs—I am too old—too ugly——"

"There, sister, there——"

"I have lost him—oh, I had as lief he were dead at my feet," sobbed Mary wildly, "as to lose him like this——"

Elizabeth stared thoughtfully at the River, golden in the summer sunlight. *Dead at my feet.* There was some sort of echo in it. *Dead at my feet.* . . .

"Better that he died," wept Mary, "than to go from me so—I think I cannot live and know him living too, but lost—lost to me—far better know him in his grave, than gone from me like this, and I—alone——"

"I am not so sure of that," said Elizabeth slowly then, staring at the River.

"You!" moaned Mary resentfully. "You do not know—how can you know what I feel—how I suffer—and you but a maid, unloved—how can you know, when you have never loved a man——"

Elizabeth sat silent, her arms about the stricken Queen, till Mary, quieter now, and able to notice that her kerchief was wetter than her streaming face and that her cap was all to one side and that she looked something less than royal, raised herself on one hand, and leaned to peer into Elizabeth's face, turned toward the window.

"Why, then—" croaked the Queen, all aquiver with her own grief, "why, then—you, too, Bess?—was it Seymour, after all?—'twas true, then—about Seymour——?"

Elizabeth's lips had opened for a swift denial, but she closed them again on a wry smile. Still Seymour? *Always* Seymour? Oh, well—let be. It would not matter now—to anyone. And for that other's sake—let it be Seymour, if they liked.

"Ah, that—" she sighed. "'Twas but a silly girl's delusion—I dare say—and not to be compared with this," she confessed with seemly modesty and respect for the Queen's present sorrow, for one must humour Mary always if one wished to retain one's perilous hold on her affection. But somehow Elizabeth's eyes filled with real tears—not for Seymour. "Poor Thomas," she added hastily, a conscientious hypocrite.

"Why, Bess—I was so sure—they said—I didn't know——"

"'Tis finished—quite," said Elizabeth, turning the knife in that old wound.

"Poor child," said Mary kindly, and patted her hand.

And so they sat together, friends again, drawn closer by a royal lie, the Queen's aching head on Elizabeth's shoulder, her cap awry; and together watched the sun go down beyond the shining curve of the Thames.

VI

Nineteen eventful months passed before Philip set foot again on the landing-stairs at Greenwich. A wet, cold, unhealthy autumn with a lean harvest; a summer of terrific heat and drought; another winter of sickness, religious strife, abortive treason, and near famine.

The world was electrified by the dramatic abdication of the Emperor—but to Mary his retirement into that monastery at Yuste meant less the loss of a personal friend than just one more excuse for Philip to remain abroad. Charles had divided his vast possessions between his brother and his son, and Philip now ruled the Netherlands and Burgundy in addition to Spain. His new responsibilities, of which his letters made so much to Mary, seemed to sit very lightly on his holiday spirits. Stories worked their way back to the Palace at Greenwich of his kingly junketings in the streets of Brussels, dissipations on a scale quite out of his habitual sober character. Freedom from exile and his unwelcome marriage had gone entirely to his head. Mary fretted and pined, and he sent her affectionate messages now and then by some hard-riding courier—usually Robert Dudley—and always he promised to come soon, and always reminded her that she ought to do something about Elizabeth's marriage. His uncle Ferdinand, the new Emperor, a widower, had made him an offer for her hand, for himself or for one of his sons, it seemed not to matter very much which. He even reminded Mary in a roundabout way of his own son, now ten years old and possibly not quite right in the head, but heir to Spain all the same.

Philip still carried in a corner of what must be called his heart an alluring image of the Queen's young sister—but there were other and easier ladies nearer to hand. And the attraction of Elizabeth, watchful and untouchable as he had seen her last, was not enough to make England look desirable to him now that he had got away. Let someone else marry her, and tame her—but let it be a friend of Spain.

In November Gardiner had sickened and died, and Mary wept for him, bereft of one friend more. Pole was all she had left, for she no longer put perfect confidence in a single member of her Council. He had at length and rather unwillingly accepted the archbishopric of Canterbury, and during Philip's absence had come to live in the Palace, her right hand, polite and gentle and wise and aloof, remaining somehow forever detached and out of reach even when he bowed before her. Had he wished, Pole might have been practically King, with Philip away, but he preferred as always his unambitious tranquillity and refused ever to offer the slightest opposition to the wishes of the Council.

The hot dry summer of 1556 simmered with rebellion and ill omens. Mary's personal popularity had waned so fast since her triumph over Wyatt that it is doubtful if even the longed-for child could have restored her to the hearts of the multitude. The poor, to whom she was always generous, and the country gentry, who never saw her for she made no progresses, remained more or less untouched by the general unrest. But London, Parliament, and the Court were seething.

Mary appeared occasionally in public now, pale and ill, but there were no journeys and no state gaieties. Philip's servants had begun to slip away in twos and threes to rejoin him on the Continent—a bad sign. Mary shed more tears, and harboured a growing resentment against her subjects; if they had allowed Philip to be crowned as was his right and her wish, he might have felt more at home in England and been willing to remain at her side. But even with Gardiner dead they still held out against his coronation. It was England's fault, not hers, that Philip was an outsider still.

She was angry at Elizabeth too, for not acceding instantly and gracefully to Philip's least wish, and marrying whomever he chose for her husband. There were arguments, and stormy scenes between the sisters again; whereupon Elizabeth retired from Court with injured dignity and left Mary to her loneliness. Both of them sulked. And both of them missed the nearest thing to companionship they had ever had—hours when Elizabeth played the virginals or read aloud to the Queen; card-games together, for Mary loved to gamble. She had neither the heart nor the authority to force marriage upon Elizabeth. But Philip would not or could not see what Mary was so keenly aware of—that the nation would never allow its Princess to be exiled into a foreign marriage against her will. The surest way to insurrection was to try and harry Elizabeth out of the country. An army would spring up around her over

night. Mary wore herself out writing long, explanatory, begging letters to Philip—in French—and tore most of them up.

Throughout that hot, sickly, troubled summer Elizabeth lived quietly at Hatfield, doing fine needlework, reading great books. Parry and Mrs. Ashley were with her again, and the youngsters of the noble Protestant houses flocked to join her modest household as maids-in-waiting, pages, companions and servitors in any capacity, till her slender allowance was seriously embarrassed for their maintenance. Cecil was gardening again at Wimbledon, she knew—laying plans and waiting, and keeping meanwhile in close touch with her. She counted on him and trusted him implicitly. Robert Dudley shuttled between Philip and the Queen, bearing dispatches for the most part quite useless. While the lords of the Protestant party, instead of scattering to their country homes for the hot weather, hung about in town breeding discord like a fever, till the Council summarily dismissed them.

Meanwhile a new scheme similar to the Wyatt Rebellion was hatching at the Court of Henry II, where English Protestant exiles were gathering. Mary was to be sent to join Philip on the Continent, while Courtenay was to be brought back and married to Elizabeth after all, and the two of them placed on the throne. As a project, it was not much more improbable than the achievement of Henry VII in 1483—except that Courtenay was not Henry. Courtenay was safe in Italy and refused to budge. He died there, mysteriously, in September, and one conspiracy more was ended, with the recall of Noailles who had been again the London centre for trouble.

Elizabeth was not directly involved this time, though some of her servants were arrested and a guard was set on her house. Mary even expressed confidence in her, and sent her another ring in token of her trust, and Elizabeth wrote her affectionately from her studious seclusion.

It was December before she dared stop doing nothing so patently in Hertfordshire. But at last she entered London with a more pretentious retinue than had ever yet accompanied her, intending to spend Christmas at her mansion of Somerset Place in the Strand, with a few gaieties of her own. The populace welcomed her rapturously, and she was herself with them this time, nodding and smiling and waving her hand. The courtiers swarmed—until she dreaded Mary's displeasure. It was so flagrant—how besides her own warm friends, all the rest were beginning to seek the favour of the heir.

She went to pay her respects to Mary and found her in tears. Another letter had just come from Philip, berating his wife for not being able to control so insignificant a subject as her half-sister. Sobbing, the Queen turned on Elizabeth, blaming her and her alone for the agony of despair Philip's continued absence and unjust reproaches wrought. If it were not for Elizabeth's obstinacy the Savoy marriage might have been consummated long ago, to Philip's satisfaction—and who was Elizabeth to thwart him? And if it were not for the jealous love the nation bore her as the heir, Philip might have been crowned King of England, as he so

desired. And if the Protestants had not had Elizabeth as a rallying-point, there would not be this constant rumble of civil war and religious upheaval. Thus poor Mary, who could never realize that Elizabeth or no Elizabeth, Protestantism was bound to come, in England.

Elizabeth heard her out sadly, seeing all their understanding and good will evaporating in the cold blast of Philip's distant animosity. And once again, firmly, and with greater confidence than ever before, she refused to marry Savoy or anybody, not even the King's son. Backing toward the door, with a last deep curtsy on the threshold, she realized that there was only one thing to do—retire into the country out of reach of these estranging arguments and deadlocks. Philip had spoilt her Christmas. She dared not remain at Somerset Place.

Passing quickly through the ante-chamber and out into the corridor, she almost trod on the toes of a man who approached her quietly against the light. She looked up scowling, preoccupied, ready to scold and dismiss anyone who sought her favour now.

"Your Grace—I had almost despaired——"

It was Robert Dudley.

For a moment when he had straightened from his bow she stared at him, still frowning—at his dark curls and merry eyes, and the gleam of his teeth as he smiled. Yes, of course she knew him—but who—where—when . . .

"Oh," she said abruptly, as it came to her. "So 'twas you brought this letter that has made all the trouble!"

"Why," he queried sympathetically, entranced with the spontaneous intimacy of her greeting, "is there trouble?"

"Savoy again," she sighed, knowing it for no secret.

"Ah," said Robert cryptically.

"Why in God's name can he not get him a wife on the Continent and leave me in peace!"

"I think—he has tried," said Robert, very knowing, and caught and held her eyes.

Elizabeth gazed back, searchingly. What did he mean to tell her, in those half-dozen words? Naturally he knew things that she could not, and he freshly come from Philip. Was he to be trusted? He was Philip's protégé—Northumberland's son—and yet . . . She looked about the quiet corridor—a sentry dozing by the door—a funkey passing on some errand with hardly a glance at them—her two attendant maids flirting with someone out of a window twenty feet away. Her fingers brushed his sleeve. She was tall, but she must look way up to Robert Dudley.

"I return to the country at once," she breathed. "But——"

"Your Grace—trust me—give me leave to speak—" His eyes were ardent, his lips were very near and smiling, the satin of his sleeve rustled against her own.

"Can any sovereign trust a Dudley?" she murmured.

"My poor father," he admitted, and his shoulders rose in a small fatalistic shrug. "But do you remember, when your brother

died, a summons in his name—and another message too, by the same hand?"

She stared at him, incredulous, longing to believe, and somehow entirely convinced. Five crumpled words in an unfamiliar script—*The King will die to-night.* . . .

"So that was you!"

"'Twas I, your Grace."

With another glance about the quiet corridor, she drew him further from the door where the sentry leaned on his halberd.

"I dare not risk a meeting at my house," she said. "Tell me now."

"'Tis little enough I know, your Grace, but—Savoy courts the Duchess of Lorraine, and Philip—finds her charming too. Hence his Highness's renewed zeal to find a bride for Savoy!"

Elizabeth took it in quickly—Christina, Duchess of Lorraine, she who might have been Queen of England once if she had not dared to send a pert answer to the old King. She had married the Duke of Lorraine since then, and borne him a son before he died. Now she was back at the imperial court, with her dimples and her shocking remarks, and Philip—was—jealous—of—Savoy. Very clear.

"I see," said Elizabeth. "Does the Queen know this?"

"I think not. No doubt 'twill reach her soon enough."

"Does he mean to return to England—ever?"

"Not if he can get what he wants without."

"My marriage."

"And a war with France."

"God knows England does not want him here," said Elizabeth vindictively. "But if brother Philip wants aught of me he can come and ask it—on his knees!"

"Your Grace—never give him what he asks—on his knees or no! Never leave England now, whatever comes. You have not long to wait—"

"Hush." Her fingers on his sleeve again, and his quick to press them ere they fled. "I understand. I beg you take no risks for me—not yet. Now let me go."

"And you, madam—take every risk to stay in England! 'Twill not be long—"

"Hush—oh, hush—!"

She left him, and went quickly down the corridor, collecting her maids from the window recess with three sharp words—and turned the corner without a backward glance. He stood looking after her—a great lady, just as he had always thought of her—no great beauty perhaps, but what eyes she had!—a very great lady, to be a queen. . . .

Elizabeth went back to Hatfield and was ill. And Mary, bent close above the page, wrote another of those long, tear-stained letters—in French—to Philip, which he deciphered with great difficulty, and annotated in the margins, and pigeon-holed and forgot. ". . . The business cannot be brought to the termination your

Highness desires without your presence," pleaded Mary with many blots and erasures. "*Wherefore, my lord, as humbly as I can, being your most loyal and obedient wife—très obéissante—(as, I confess, I most justly ought to be, and I think more than other women, having such a husband as your Highness, without counting your numerous kingdoms, for that is not my foundation) I beg your Highness that we may both pray to God, and place our firm dependence upon him, and that we may live and do our duty together, and may this same God, who holds the hearts of kings in his hand, I hope, soon illuminate us that the end may be to his glory and your content. Begging your Highness to pardon my presuming on the goodness of God in this matter. . . .*"

In March, 1557, Robert Dudley brought a message from Philip announcing his immediate return to England.

Mary sat and cried for happiness, while Greenwich Palace whirled with excited preparations for his reception. The Council sat all night and every night, knowing that he came to urge a war with France. It was the sort of thing they had expected from the first, and it was expressly against the marriage treaty, which promised England immunity from Spain's wars. War with France would involve war with the Pope, which was abhorrent to Reginald Pole. Money was scarce, and men could not be spared till after the next harvest. If Philip won, England would gain nothing thereby. And if Philip lost, England would no doubt be blamed.

This time Philip actually arrived on the heels of his promise. Travelling in his wake as a sort of ambassadress extraordinary to Elizabeth in the matter of the marriage, ready to chaperone her back to the Continent if she could be made to go, came the Duchess of Lorraine. She took up her residence in London, with a merry and insolent eye on this land she had jilted as a chit in her teens. She was still well short of forty, and it amused her mightily to be in England after all.

Her retinue was magnificent, her lodgings were almost royal, her table and her gowns were far more elaborate than the Queen's own. Mary, emerging from the first blind transports of joy at having Philip with her again, began to be aware of the splendour of the Duchess of Lorraine. No widow of a French duke could afford it. Savoy himself was notoriously penniless. Who, then, but Philip. . . . Mary was shocked and hurt and angry. It was Philip's money which paid Christina's enormous expenses—because he could not bear to leave her behind even while he came to cajole his wife into a war with France.

Philip tried to explain that Christina had come to see Elizabeth, as an ambassadress of the imperial house to a prospective bride of Savoy. It seemed to Philip that that covered the ground enough for the proprieties. But for once the sisters stood together, and against Philip. Elizabeth refused to see the Duchess at all, and Mary refused to summon her to Court. Philip saw his mistake a little late, and Christina departed abruptly in May, her dimples still in evidence—had she not seen England anyhow?—while he stayed on to repair damages as best he could.

He found the Queen frightfully altered, but always pitifully ready to please him, and a fresh conspiracy that summer with its roots again in the French court gave him a new advantage. He pointed out that she would never have any peace of mind as long as Elizabeth was free to conspire with France for the possession of the throne. Mary, who had begun to hope for a child again, gave in to him with tears, and war was declared in June. The marriage negotiations progressed as far as a treaty providing for the titles and inheritance of the possible children of Elizabeth and Savoy, and Elizabeth's formal consent was demanded. She replied from Hatfield that she would rather die than go to the Continent—and waited for the heavens to fall.

Luckily there was a war on. Philip hurried back to superintend it and once more the marriage was left on the table. He departed from Dover in July, and this time there was no one to comfort Mary as she sobbed out her loneliness and disappointment. He had been four months in England, only. And now he was gone again, to the war and—to the Duchess of Lorraine? Mary went a little mad. Her women, tiptoeing in after a discreet interval, found the Queen on her knees on the floor, a pair of scissors flung down beside her. She was trying, between long sobbing breaths of exhaustion, to fit back together the tiny jagged pieces of a mutilated picture of Philip.

Another year dragged by—a year of storms and floods and meteors, high winds and fevers, till people said the plague would surely come again. Once more the harvest failed, and food prices soared. Anne of Cleves died peacefully, and was buried at Westminster—Pembroke and Robert Dudley were distinguishing themselves in France—then Calais fell to the French—there was trouble in Scotland too—Mary's renewed hope of motherhood gave way to a new despair—she saw Elizabeth occasionally on friendly terms—the war dragged on, and Philip did not even trouble to write—the Dauphin married Mary Stuart—Pole took to his bed with a quartan ague—and in September, 1558, came the news of the Emperor's death in the monastery at Yuste. Philip would never come to England now—Mary's last hold on him was gone.

VII

Hatfield on a morning in November, and the ground was striped with white tree-shadows of unmelted snow in the bright sunshine. Elizabeth turned from her window and routed out two puss-by-the-fire maids-of-honour, who were settling to their needlework beside the hearth. She commanded boots, and capes with hoods, and led the way out into the crisp air.

They went along the slope of the lawn from the house toward the avenue of oaks and bore to the right, chattering, slipping on the frosted hummocks with little laughing squalls, making intricate tracks in the slippery whiteness, complaining cheerfully of the winter

which would soon set in. Elizabeth walked between them, growing more thoughtful with each step, holding her cloak about her. The bench under the tree where they had sat to sew and read last June held a rim of rime, shaded by the close bare branches from the sun.

Elizabeth trudged on, scuffing at the turf, wondering dimly why this frosty morning seemed somehow familiar, as though she had lived it before. . . . Suddenly she halted, staring at the ground beneath her feet—it was as though dark water ran where the road began, beyond a muddy bank. For a moment only she paused there, and then moved on, clutching time about her like a cloak—ten years—ten full, comforting, terrible years, since that morning by the River. . . .

Behind them from the direction of the house came a hail, faint with distance, and the girls looked back.

“It’s Mr. Cecil !” one of them exclaimed.

“He’s—running !” said the other.

Elizabeth had not heard. She walked on, head bent, wrapped in her cloak, alone. The girls looked at her and at each other, large-eyed, suddenly breathless. He had been coming very often, of late, it was true, but—this time he must have left London early in the morning. . . .

“Your Grace——”

“Well ?” said Elizabeth crossly over her shoulder, and walked on.

“Your Grace—do look, it’s Mr. Cecil—running !”

“Cecil ?” Elizabeth spun round at that, an arm flung up to shield her eyes against the sun. Cecil was coming toward them down the road, one hand at his swinging sword-hilt, his cap in the other, which he waved at them—shouting—stumbling—running. Elizabeth turned back to meet him, and as she went she too—for a few steps—ran.

He flung himself on his knees when he reached her—on his knees in the cold mud of the road. He had ridden hard, and his clothes were spattered with it. He was panting.

“Your M-Majesty— !” gasped Cecil, and was seized by a spasm of coughing.

Elizabeth stood still in the muddy road, in the early sunlight, sick and giddy. Foolish to feel like this, now that it had come. One had known that it must come—any time—any minute—these days. And yet—long as one had waited—often as one had almost lost hope—*so soon?*

Her hand went out gropingly—and she felt Cecil’s lips pressed hard against her knuckles. No kiss of ceremony, that. Excitement, exaltation, ran from his pounding pulses into hers. Her shoulders straightened, and her chin came up. *Majesty*. . . .

The two girls had paused discreetly, a decorous four paces to the rear, but their eyes were very round and their red mouths hung slightly open. She turned to them, white-faced, erect, seeming to their awed gaze inches taller, miles remote.

"The Queen is dead," she told them very quietly.

"G-God save the Queen!" they gasped, and curtsied where they stood.

Her eyes rested on them gravely—it was thus, under the dripping trees of Hatfield park, from the parrot lips of two little maids-in-waiting that she first heard that mighty prayer—for herself.

Cecil had risen, and stood beside her waiting.

"Madam—we have much to do. The Chancellor will make the announcement to both Houses this morning, and the Proclamation will be read before noon at Cheapside. There will be no trouble about the accession—we may be sure of that—but orders have gone out to close the ports, in case—"

His voice went on endlessly, efficiently, as they walked back toward the house. And there, at a great oak table in the panelled parlour, they sat down with inkstands and pens and the blank white sheets of paper on which the history of England was to be written in the fine, neat hand of old Henry's sole surviving child.

Cecil spread before her from his saddle-bags his lists of names, his suggestions for letters to the Continent, recommendations for new appointments abroad, memorandums as to her immediate attitude toward the Church, outlines of speeches—he had thought of everything, and had everything in readiness. Elizabeth, her head between her two slim hands, did her best to concentrate and follow what he said—she nodded and attended scrupulously, and said Yes and No at the proper points in his low-voiced, droning discourse. But at last, almost unconsciously, she singled out from the mass of written papers he had scattered across the fair white sheets still to come, a single document in a clerky hand ; and she sat staring at it, wide-eyed, fascinated, her lips parted on her breath that came and went quickly : *Elizabeth by the Grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith . . .*

"—letters under the Queen's hand to all ambassadors with foreign princes, to authorize them therein," Cecil was reading from his memorandum at her elbow.

. . . Because it hath pleased Almighty God by calling to his mercy out of this mortal life, to our great grief, our dearest sister of noble memory, Mary, late Queen of England, France and Ireland (whose soul God have) to dispose and bestow upon us . . .

"Seven : To appoint commissioners for the interment of the late Queen," continued Cecil like an answering litany from his own paper.

"Eight : To appoint commissioners for the coronation, and the day. Nine : To make a continuance of the terms, with patents to the Chief Justice—"

. . . We do publish and give knowledge by this our proclamation to all manner people, being natural subjects of every the said kingdoms, she read on, that from the beginning of the seventeenth day of this month of November, at which time our said dearest sister departed from this mortal life, they be discharged of all bonds and duty of subjection toward our said sister, and be from the same time in nature and law bound only to us as their only Sovereign Lady and Queen. . . .

She looked up into a silence, to find Cecil waiting, his eyes somewhat reproachful.

"I am listening," she said meekly, and laid down the Proclamation.

"A deputation from the Council will be here within a few hours," he remarked, "and it is necessary to have first of all some idea of the suitable things to say when the formal announcement of the Queen's death is made—"

"Yes, of course," she agreed, her attention pouncing at once on this matter of an utterance which would be recorded of her forevermore. "There is that bit in the Psalms—yes, that is what I want—how does it go—*A Domino factum est illud et—et—est*—" She snapped her fingers impatiently at her own memory.

"—*et est mirabile in oculis nostris*," smiled Will Cecil promptly.

"Good."

"Are you sure—"

"Yes. That will do nicely. I shall say that." And then for a moment she stared at him, troubled, with brimming eyes. "Oh, poor Mary," she murmured, thinking of the dead Queen for the first time that morning as a lost sister and a woman, piteous and ill, who had died almost alone. "Poor Mary—she might have sent for me—I should have gone—"

"It was very peaceful," said Cecil perfunctorily, for her comfort, rummaging out another paper to lay before her. "Now if I might suggest, madam—I have here a list of the Council as it now stands. And here another list of—I submit—suitable and worthy men which your Majesty would do well to—consider. The Chancellor, Pembroke, and Howard will be among the first to reach here, I understand, when the—formalities in London are concluded. I have heard that the Archbishop is—dying. Arundel is still abroad at Cercamp on that matter of the Peace—they are trying to save Calais to us, but I fear—"

"Where is Dudley?" asked Elizabeth, interrupting.

"Robert? I have no idea," said Cecil, which was not altogether true. But the name was nowhere on any of his lists.

"I want him," she announced quietly. "Master of Horse, I think—something like that—put him down."

There was a silence while he wrote, she watching over his shoulder. His own name did not appear on his papers either, for he had held no official position under Mary. Elizabeth chose a fresh blank sheet from the pile and drew it towards her.

"Now," she said. "Now for my Privy Council." And with a sidelong glance at him she took the pen from between his fingers, dipped it, and wrote across the top of the fair page: *Will. Cecil, Secretary of State.*

"Your Majesty—!"

"Tush, man, you expected it!" Her elbow nudged his familiarly on the table. "With Howard for Lord Chamberlain and you for Secretary—I am surely safe! We'll have Parry, too—he knows how I like things done."

"A distant connection of mine—by marriage," he acknowledged, watching in his turn while the pen set down the two names beneath his own.

"I know—he has told me so. Comptroller of the Household—there, that's for old Parry." She referred again to his list. "Who else—Arundel shall stay as he is—why not—Lord Steward?" She wrote. "Such a handsome man—so gallant—so susceptible!"

"Madam—" "

"Who comes next—Pembroke—yes. Clinton—oh, yes. Winchester—?" Her brow wrinkled with doubt.

"A pliable man," he murmured. "Very—obliging."

"Well—perhaps." She wrote him slowly. "We shall see about Winchester—Lord Treasurer. Who's for Chancellor—Heath must go, for he will be a Catholic to the bitter end—besides, he's very old—"

"Madam, as regards religion, I beg that you will not be hasty. In fact, I have written out—"

"One thing at a time," she insisted sharply. "Who's for Chancellor, when Heath is gone?"

And so on, while the short winter day passed its high noon, until someone brought candles; and still they sat at the long table, their heads together, their dinner cooling untasted beside them. Who was for Chancellor—who for Lord Privy Seal—in the matter of religion, better do nothing at all just yet—they must be prudent—the burnings must stop, of course—and what was to be done about the Pope—then there was her marriage—Parliament was bound to bring that up at once—and there must be a letter to Philip—this business of the Peace at Cercamp—France would offer separate terms to England now—look out for Philip there—was there any hope of Calais—now as to the late Queen's funeral—and the new Queen's entry into London—what would she say—what would she wear. . . .

The long, wrangling, devoted partnership had begun.

On the twenty-third she rode to London, with a splendid retinue, and because the Tower was not ready for her reception she lived for nearly a week at Charterhouse. From there, along gravelled streets, through crowds which laughed and cried and sang and shouted themselves hoarse, through the thunder of cannon and the ringing of church bells, she made her progress to the Tower, on horseback, wearing a purple gown. The Lord Mayor rode before, with her sceptre, while Pembroke bore the sword of state. And just behind her, magnificently mounted, gorgeously clad, rode Robert Dudley, Master of Horse.

VIII

In was past midnight of the fifteenth of January, 1559.

In the state bedchamber at Whitehall, curled snugly round the comfort of a softly wrapped hot brick in the middle of the great bed—

for she had caught cold in the coronation procession from the Tower to Westminster the day before—Elizabeth lay awake.

Mary had lain in that bed, the night after she was crowned, with the mother of Courtenay by her side—hating the short summer dark, poor Mary, afraid to be alone. Edward had slept there, too, a weary child of nine, on a cold night like this—had someone thought to give him a hot brick, and leave a friendly fire to smoulder on the hearth? And Henry, the great loud man who had fathered them all—well, he had died there, she supposed. And now his little red wench was Queen of England.

In the cold winter moonlight she could trace the stout oak posts of the bed rising plumply to the brooding shadows beneath the tester. Her turn now, to sleep here, and she young and strong and not afraid of anything, and with so much to do.

Her head was humming slightly from the hot mulled draught they had given her because she sneezed—the banquet had gone on and on, a delicious blur of music and red liveries and the trumpets which heralded each new course—to-morrow was the joust, and on the twenty-third she was to open her first Parliament—there was no time to be ill. She swallowed, cautiously, testing her tonsils—it hurt. There should have been more rugs in the litter—she had not foreseen so many stops and so much ceremony—but what a day it had been, clear and cold—the shouting, sobbing, loyal mobs, the flutter of pennons and streamers and waving kerchiefs, the caps tossed in the air—the pageants and speeches and tableaux, and the earnest little boys and girls, reciting poems and presenting gifts—they all tried so hard, and their elders all so anxious—dear, blue-eyed English children smiling up at her—that orphans' choir at Christ's Hospital, pink-nosed with cold but singing like infant angels all the same—she hoped they had been taken straight home and given warm food and drink when she had passed, else they would all have caught colds too—that pitiful woman, with the sprig of rosemary and the tragic eyes—would one ever see her again—the man who said he remembered old King Harry, and blushed and pulled his forelock when she heard, and smiled at him—her people, one and all, her England now.

To-day, the coronation—the long blue-carpeted path to the high altar, amid the pealing bells and the voices singing *Salva feste dies*—the same blue cloth which Mary had trod only five years ago, and the bishop in hastily borrowed robes, because the state of the Exchequer required the utmost economy if there was to be any coronation at all—her own voice, strangely, repeating the Lord's Prayer alone—the gospel and epistle (read in English, at her request)—the coronation oaths, more terrible by far than the marriage vows—the oil for the anointing was nasty and it smelt—the crown was heavy and caught on her hair—the ring, made smaller, had looked very well on her white hand—(she stirred drowsily, to feel the small cool weight of it in the dark)—dear Howard, grinning in the row of peers, big with his delight and pride of her—but the homage was the best part, and had brought tears to her eyes—tall

Arundel, premier earl of the land, on his knees, his hands between her hands, his daring eyes lifted to her face, her hair, her throat—such a gallant, handsome man, and not yet fifty after all—the same thrill ran through her again as she considered that he was a widower now, and openly her suitor, the last of his ancient line since the death of his only son last year—“*I become your liege man of life and limb, and of all earthly worship and faith*” . . . And at last, the thousands of voices as one, ringing to the high grey vaults of stone—“*God save Queen Elizabeth!*” Ah, but it was good, good, after all these lean years, it warmed one’s blood and set one dreaming of great deeds, great triumphs, great empires. . . .

England was so small. It seemed much smaller since the loss of Calais. Cecil said it was best not to fight for Calais, but Cecil had no enterprise—a realm gained more by one year’s peace than ten years’ war, said Cecil—and he was right, of course. But Calais had been English so long—since the days of Edward III and good Queen Philippa—and with Ireland always in trouble, and Scotland always at war, with Henry of France and Philip of Spain both hoping to gobble England up—England had not even its own island to itself.

As though Philip had not enough land already with his tremendous inheritance and his colonies in the New World—fascinating words—one would like to see a New World. A man named Columbus had found it, fifty, sixty years ago, wasn’t it—islands, with savages, odd foods, a warm, delicious climate, people said—not quite like India, but rich and strange—San Domingo, it was called—and there was another island named Florida—flowers all the year round, they said—and it belonged to Philip, for which the Portuguese hated him. New Spain, too—where was that? On the other side, somewhere, on the Pacific Ocean. One must look into this. Why had not England got a Columbus? Her eyes grew wider in the dark. Why not a New England? Surely it was very big, out there—need Philip have it all? England should have islands of its own, if one had only to go and take them. There had to be ships, of course. Philip had beautiful ships, and the Portuguese had sailed clean round the world in theirs, while the little coastwise vessels England built never ventured beyond the Flanders markets and the fishing banks. Was England to be always merely a nation of fishermen and merchants? Were the Genoese and the Portuguese the only navigators? Weren’t there Englishmen brave enough to sail westward till they came to land?

There must be ships. Her father had built ships, and talked with the sailor men at Portsmouth and Greenwich—she could remember stories—there was a ship called *The Great Harry*, when she was a little girl—there was a man named Hawkins who went somewhere, what had become of him?—where were her father’s ships that he had loved—rotting in the idle harbours, while Mary pined and died because Philip had gone away.

The New World. America, they called it. Pretty name. But why should Spain have it all? Because Spain was rich, and Philip

could afford to build ships and hire navigators, whereas England was poor, and had only a girl for a queen? England was a snug green land, to be sure, with its big fair men and blue-eyed babies—but now that the French had Calais and Scotland, and the Portuguese held the route to India, and Spain had found a whole new world. . . .

She would speak to Cecil. To-morrow. There would be so much to do to-morrow—all the to-morrows. How lucky to have a man like Cecil at her right hand, steady and trustworthy and kind—and comfortably married. No nonsense about Cecil. On the other hand, there was Robert Dudley, who kept his wife out of sight in the country and—yes, there might conceivably be considerable nonsense about Robert. Again a thrill ran through her. One must be careful and discreet. . . .

Parliament would be at her to marry, of course. Before Mary died, the King of Sweden had sent to offer his son Eric—Sweden would certainly be heard from again, now that she was Queen—there were tales about Eric, though—he was handsome, they said, but bad—very bad—something of a ruffian. She was looking fastidious in the dark. The Prince of Denmark was still a bachelor, with apparently as little taste for marriage as herself—and his uncle the Duke of Holstein was supposed to be young and comely—the Archduke Charles of Austria had been mentioned as an accomplished and elegant prince—and, of course, there was Philip. Philip was already indicating his willingness to marry her—that chilly man with the protruding gaze who had slowly murdered Mary, he and his child which never came—with Philip as her husband she could defy the French and all this talk about Mary Stuart—but why not defy them without him—her people would stand behind her on that—she had no need of Philip—he had done enough harm in England—the thing now was to keep him out—one must be tactful, of course—one must not make an enemy of Philip—not yet.

Anyway, she would never marry a foreigner, because see what Mary had suffered by it. Yet if Mary had thought an Englishman beneath the dignity of the throne—that was only Courtenay, of course—Mary had had no such prospects as Arundel, or Howard's son—there were unmarried English gallants aplenty now, it seemed—a pity that Robert—with a gasp, she turned her feverish cheeks into the pillow. Well, never mind, she could not have married Robert anyway, she would never marry anyone, it was much better as it was : herself on the throne, quite alone, Queen in her own right—and behind the throne, there could still be Robert, merry and laughing and—fond.

Parliament would make immediate difficulties about the marriage—it existed for no other purpose. She and Cecil were already working on the speech she would make to them in reply to their inevitable recommendation that she marry at once—*From my years of understanding, since I first had consideration of my life, to be born a servitor of Almighty God, I happily chose this kind of life, in the which I yet live . . . so constant have I always continued in this determination, although my youth and words may seem to some hardly to agree together . . .*

THE TUDOR WENCH

this shall be for me sufficient, that a marble-stone shall declare, that a queen, having reigned such a time, lived and died a virgin. . . . Very fine. But it would not settle Parliament for long, nor stem the tide of European suitors, for no one would believe her—at first. They would see. Even Cecil did not quite believe her. Well, he would see too.

No one to compel her. Her very toes curled with the delightful knowledge. She was Queen. She was young and eager and beloved—as her father had been at his crowning. She would not make his mistakes, and therefore they would love her to the end—but equally she would never admit to a soul that he had made mistakes. He was a great King. She would be great too. *The greatest Tudor of them all.* The phrase stirred sleepily in her mind. Well, anyway, greater than Mary—greater than Edward—yes, because of all his marrying, greater even than great Henry himself.

God was very good to her. She had made a prayer and said it as she left the Tower yesterday—it was all her own, Cecil had not laid pen to it—how did it go—*O Lord Almighty and Everlasting God, I give Thee most humble and hearty thanks, that Thou hast been so merciful unto me as to spare me to behold this joyful and blessed day—and I acknowledge that Thou hast dealt as wonderfully and as mercifully with me as Thou didst with Thy true and faithful servant, Daniel, Thy prophet; whom Thou deliveredst out of the lions' den, from the cruelty of the greedy and raging lions; even so was I overwhelmed, and only by Thee delivered; to Thee therefore only be thanks, and honour, and praise, forevermore. . . .*

And so, just short of the *Amen*, curled round her hot brick with one slim hand between her cheek and the pillow, Elizabeth of England slept.



QUEEN ELIZABETH

From a portrait by Gheeraerdt in the possession of the Earl of Radnor. Reproduced here
by kind permission of the owner.

PLATE II



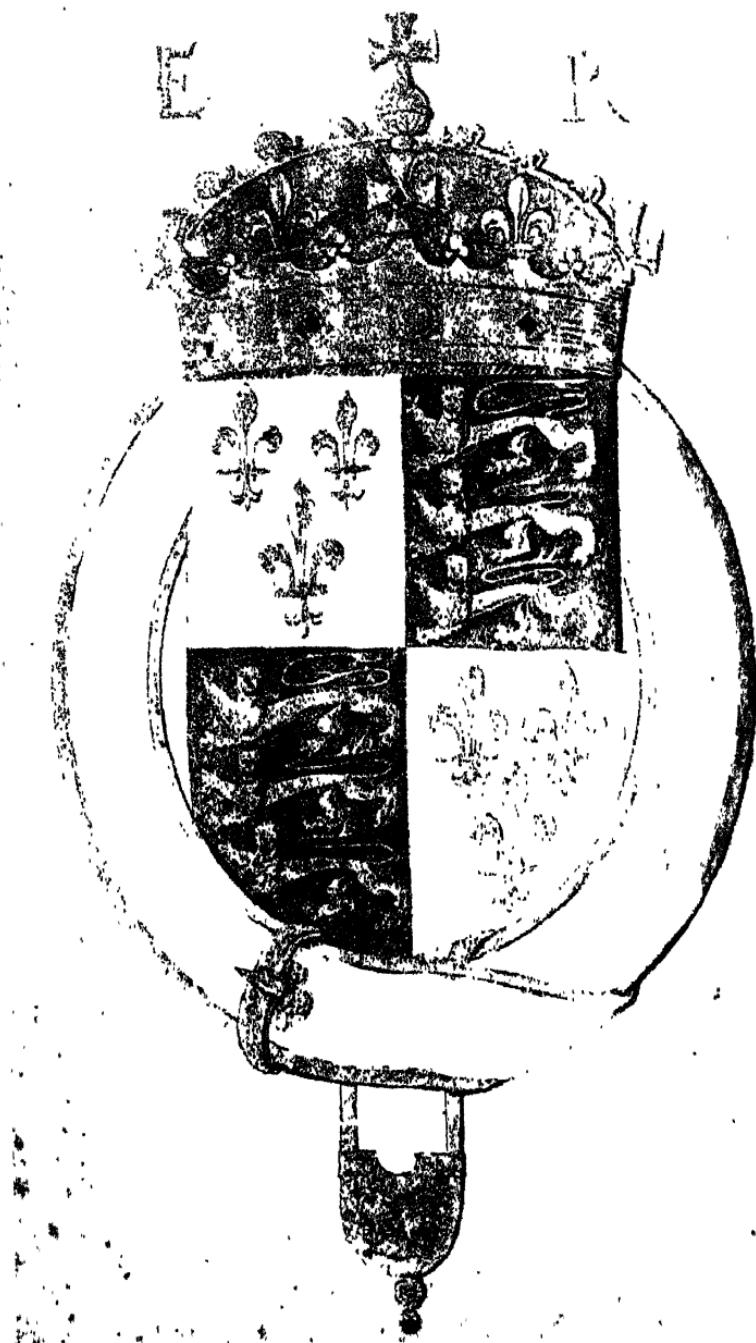
MARY TUDOR

About the time of her marriage. From the portrait by Mor in the Prado Museum.



PHILIP II

About the time of his marriage. From the portrait by Titian in the
Prado Museum.



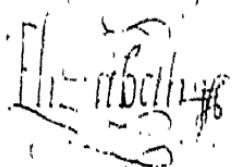
TITLE PAGE OF EDWARD'S JOURNAL

The original is in the Cottonian MSS. See Note to page 128. (Facsimile reduced 1.)

My Lorde hauntes vñfenece your Lordships letters I perceue in them your goodwiſe towardes
 me because you declare to me plaine your myſte in this thmoe and againe for that you
 woldē not wyche that I haue do any thmoe that shulde not ſeme good unto the counſel
 for the wiche tñnge I geue you myſt hartie thankes . And wheras I do understande
 that you do take myſt parie the Cœr. that I culd write unto your Lordshippe I am
 verye ſone that you shulde take them ſo for my miſerie was to declare unto you plaine
 liſe as I thought in that thmoe wiche I haue ſay the more willinglye becauſe I write
 to you yow desired me to be plaine with you in al thinges . And as concerning
 that pointe that you write that I ſeme to ſtandē in my none wite in beme ſo wel
 assured of my none ſelfe ſo diſſure me of my ſelfe nomore than I truſt the trueth
 ſhal tric . And to ſay that wiche I knewe of my ſelfe I did not thmoe ſhulde haue
 diſpleaſed the counſel or your grace . And ſurelye the cauſe whic that I was ſorye
 that ther ſhulde be anye ſuche aboute me was becauſe that I thought the people wiſſay
 that I defraude through my lewſiſt clementare to haue ſuche a one , and not that I miſlike
 anye thmoe that your Lordshippe, or the counſel ſhal thinke good for I knowe that you
 and the counſel archarged with me, or that I tak upon me to rule my ſelfe for I kno
 we the ar moſt diſcreced that truſteth moſt in them ſelues , wherfore I truſt you ſhal
 never miſtreſt that fauor in me, to the wiche thinge I do not ſe that your grace has
 made anye direete answere at this time, and ſempe the make ſo miel reportes al
 readie ſhallbe but a mereſinge of ther miel tonges, howbeit you did write that if I
 woldē bringe forthe arie that had reported it you and the counſel woldē ſe it redreſte
 wiche thmoe thought I coul d, eyc do it, I woldē be lothe to do it for becauſe it is my
 none caufe, and noyme that iſhould be but a briuage of a miel name of me that I
 am glorie to wiſhe them, and ſo get the miel wiſe of the people, wiche thmoe I
 woldē be lothe to haue . But if it mough ſo ſeme good vnto your Lordshippe
 and the reſte of the counſel to enſiue forthe a proclamation in to the countreis
 that the reſrame ther tonges reclarame now the tñies be but lies it ſhulde
 make bothe the people thinke that you and the couſiſ haue greate regarfe
 that no ſuiche rumors ſhulde be ſprende of anye of the Knges Maieſties
 Sisters as I am thought vñwordie, and also I ſhulde thinke my ſelfe to receue
 ſuiche frenſhipe at your handes as you haue promiſed me, althoſt your Lordleſſippe
 haſthe ſhewerd me greate alreadie . Howbeit I am aſchamen to aſke it
 anye more becauſe I ſe you ar not ſo wel minded therunto . And as concerning

that you are that I on no faires occasion to thynke m refymge the good re
spoldc the mel I am not of so simple vnderstandinge nor I wolt that
your grace shuld haue so mel a opinion of me that I haue so utel respecte
to my nene honestie that I wolt haue more respecte it if I had sufficiente promis
of the same, and so your grace hat proue me whan it comes to the pointe.
And thus I bid you farewel, deuiringe god alwayes to assisse you in al your
affaers . Written m hast Frome Hatfeldise this 21 of Februarie

Your assured frenche to my litel
power .

Elizabeth

ELIZABETH'S LETTER TO SOMERSET
(Continued.)

19. The Bishop of Exeter, Sir John, has
made chancery, because his custos sigilli
will exhibit nothing in the parliament,
but shall be done; but only to seal unto
such things.

20. Removal to Westminster.

21. The duke had his bower cut of upon roore hill between
and now a cloke in the morning.

22. The duke had his bower cut of upon roore hill between
and now a cloke in the morning.

23. In returning delivered at taken to the Queen
fairly dressed.
is the Duke of Northumberland having under his
men of arms, and no lighter horse than those
men of arms.

PORTION OF A PAGE FROM EDWARD VI'S JOURNAL (COTTONIAN MSS.)
CONTAINING HIS BRIEF NOTICE OF SOMERSET'S EXECUTION

See Note to page 128. (Facsimile reduced 1.)

st 16. no small grief to me to perceve, that they, whom theyng
me to our fater, whose soule god pardon, made in their wokthe of
negyng in respecte of that they be come to nare and at this laste ende
wert in triste to se hym royle parfurned wchell into ther wch
for the love & loue of them selfe, heire to Edward, his sonne
all sworne ppon a boke / it gryeveth me / I saw to se right desyred
porcer they, take upon themyselves in making as they call it lawes
both cleane contrarie to hym procedynge / & wchell, and also agaynst
the costome of all christydome, and / in my conuience agaynst the
lawe of god / hym grewe, whiche passyd all the este. But thys
yon among you have forgotten the kyng my fater, wel brygde
god commandement / natice wchell not suffre me to do so. wherefore
wch god helpe / wchell remayne an obedient cynde to hym lawes
as he left them, till such tyme as the kyng shall come
I shall have parfurne yere of discrecion to ordene to euer hys god helpe
sent hym to be a juge in thysse matters hym self / and / & doubt not
but he shal then accept me / so domyn as well better then menys /
at his power upon them in his innocente

FRAGMENT OF MARY'S LETTER TO THE COUNCIL. (LANSDOWNE MSS.)

See Note to page 119. (Facsimile reduced 1.)

APPENDIX

PREFACE

EVERYBODY has at least a vague idea of how Elizabeth died. But few people realize how intensely, how eagerly, and how long she lived. She was seventy when she died. She had reigned forty-five years. But when she came to the throne at twenty-five, there was already a crowded lifetime of experience behind her.

During the preparation of this volume I have been pursued by recurrent queries as to intimate details of Elizabeth's physical health. My unvarying reply that I was proceeding on the assumption and in the firm belief that she was a potentially normal woman whose nervous system was permanently impaired in the critical adolescent period by extreme emotional tension and cruel mental strain was usually met with open incredulity, polite tolerance, or mere surprise.

Much has been written on this subject, and some of it the wildest guess-work. The most extensive treatment of her life from the standpoint of her health is Mr. Frederic Chamberlin's *The Private Character of Queen Elizabeth*, published in 1922. He presents the opinions of five leading members of the British medical profession which were written after examination of the data which he had spent several years in assembling. Allowing for four hundred years' difference in medical terms and euphemisms, and the vagaries of Court rumour, these modern doctors are singularly in agreement on most of the main points: (1) that she was a fully and completely formed woman; (2) that there is no positive evidence that she inherited the virus of syphilis from Henry, nor that she manifested unmistakable syphilitic symptoms, the famous ulcer probably being of the commonest kind; (3) that much of her ill-health was doubtless due to the over-use of her exceptionally acute brain, and to long hours of study without suitable corrective eye-glasses; (4) that the gossip and rumour of the courts and embassies must have grossly exaggerated and distorted her indispositions; and, what is somewhat overlooked by Mr. Chamberlin in his own text, that many of her mysterious illnesses which are solemnly counted up against her were feigned in order to gain time in the long, desperate game she played.

She was a healthy child. There are no records of juvenile ailments, after teething (note to page 13), till the autumn of 1548 when the terrific tension of the Seymour business began, coinciding with the first few months of menstruation. Undoubtedly she had bouts of illness all the rest of her life, but she could never have been a confirmed invalid. It appears that the knowing whisperings about Elizabeth's alleged diseases and queernesses are of comparatively recent date. Her contemporaries and even the writers of the nineteenth century mention her robust health and tireless energy with complete assurance, except for a few old wives' tales of slanderous ambassadors. I have been able to find for Elizabeth nothing like the graphic details and horrible symptoms which abound for Edward and Mary. The only notable exception to this contemporary reticence is the Woodstock period, where her condition is vouched for by Bedingfield himself, in the almost inaccessible Bedingfield Papers, Canon Manning's reprint of which I have studied in the British Museum. The Woodstock illness, which apparently began at Ashridge in the winter, was in abeyance during her two months in the Tower, and recurred at Woodstock during the summer, after which it vanished for ever, at least in that particular form; it may have been a sort of anaemia, may have been due simply to a faulty diet, or may have resulted from an attempt at poisoning. One physician assures me that it is not impossible to suppose that it

was anything but an aggravated case of livers. The data is obviously very inadequate to a modern diagnosis.

Mr. Chamberlin has done away with what he calls the Amazon myth, but at the same time his personal opinion seems to have swung much too far toward a counter impression of almost continual ill-health from thirteen to thirty; farther than his own collected evidence and diagnoses warrant. Simply because she was "syk" in midsummer 1548, and "syk in hyr bed" in September, we are not obliged to conclude that she was never well between.

In conclusion of this somewhat fruitless discussion, let us remember that when all is said and done, Elizabeth's vigour and faculties lasted longer than most people's, especially in the sixteenth century.

With regard to the persistent legend of her death at the age of ten, and the substitution of a boy in her place—apart from the fact that Henry certainly saw her at sufficiently frequent intervals (such as in the early days of Catherine Howard's marriage in 1540, and again in the autumn of 1543 soon after his marriage to Catherine Parr, when we know positively in each case that Elizabeth was at Court) as to be able to detect any such fraud; and the fact that there is no authentic record of her having ever been as a child in the part of the country most closely associated with the story—I need only say that Henry's illegitimate son, the Duke of Richmond, whose son the substitute was supposed to be, died childless in 1536 at the age of fifteen. His widow was later deprived of her dower on the grounds that "she had not earned it."

Elizabeth's correspondence is always a joy to work with in the original. She has written so unmistakably what she meant, or what she meant them to think she meant, with an almost Shakespearean richness of phrase. Her handwriting during her girlhood is a miracle of beauty in a scrawly age. It deteriorated later on. She wrote uphill at sixteen and downhill at sixty. But the signature remained the same, not only an assertion of her own individuality, but an intricate design very difficult to forge. Her spelling was strangely modern for her time, minus most of the extra letters and curlyques of her contemporaries.

Within the text, I have modernized and occasionally clarified the letters I have quoted; but the originals have been faithfully copied in the Notes, which consist largely of embracing contemporary material for which there was no place in the narrative, such as the governess' worried account of Elizabeth's teething difficulties and consequent bad manners at the age of two. With a few exceptions I myself have seen and copied these documents, not trusting to former reprints, some of which are full of errors.

Dr. Johnson remarked that all history, so far as it was not supported by contemporary evidence, was romance. I have relied as much on the records of the earliest writers of the period—men who were in touch with the generation itself, and all its failings of partisanship, rumour, and misapprehension—as on the cold-blooded, over-deducted researches of modern historians. Prejudices are wholesome and vitalizing, as long as they are allowed to cut both ways. The yellowed pages of Foxe, Fuller, Heylin, Strype, etc., and the manuscript diaries of Machyn and the unknown Chronicler of Queen Jane and Queen Mary, are vibrantly alive and quarrelsome and often humorous. And the truth is somewhere in them.

No undoubtedly authentic portrait of Elizabeth before her coronation seems to exist, despite certain arguments more eloquent than conclusive, in favour of those at Windsor and Oxford. The frontispiece of this volume is a composite made by Ezra Winter from three authentic portraits of her during middle age—one of which is reproduced as Plate I. Mr. Winter's task was to take off about thirty years from the face painted by Ghersaerdt, and to dress her in the costume worn during her late teens, before the days of the ruff, which came in with Spanish Philip. It must be remembered that the predominant popular impression of Elizabeth is based on the last third of her long life, in the days of the Mary Stuart matter, the Armada, and the Essex affair. She aged early, but in her obscure girlhood she was genuinely admired, without flattery, for her red-haired vitality and her triumphant charm. Writing home in 1557, the Venetian ambassador says that she was "*a young woman whose mind is considered no less excellent than her person, although her face is comely rather than beautiful, but she is tall and well formed, with a good skin,*" and he goes on to mention her "*fine eyes*" and above all "*a beautiful hand, of which she makes a display.*" Burnet describes her fascina-

tion for the populace : "She passed through London in Great Triumph : and having observed that her Sister, by the Sullenness of her Behaviour to the People, had much lost their Affections ; therefore she always used, as she passed through Crowds, but more especially this Day, to look out of her Coach cheerfully on them, and to return the Respects they paid her with great Sweetness in her Looks ; commonly saying, God bless you, my People, which affected them much. . . . And indeed this Queen had a strange Art of insinuating her self by such ways into the Affections of her People. Some said she was too theatrical in it ; but it wrought her end ; since by these little things in her Deportment she gained more on their Affections than other Princes have been able to do by more real and significant Arts of Grace and Favour." Spanish Feria, who had no fondness for her, remarked, "The Queen, when she came to the crown, was full twenty-five years of age, a gracious lady and gallant of aspect."

Note.—Since the above was written, Mr. Chamberlin has published *The Private Character of Henry VIII* (1932), a monumental recantation of some of the points to which I objected in his 1922 volume on Elizabeth. Further researches have led him to the opinion that Henry's trouble was fundamentally caused by a fall from his horse in 1536 ; while the ulcers seem to have had a simple origin in varicose veins, rather than in syphilis, which Henry probably never had and hence could hardly have transmitted a taint to Elizabeth. It was, of course, a very new disease in Europe at that time.

NOTES TO PART ONE

In the winter of 1539 Elizabeth and her half-sister Mary were domiciled together at Hertford Castle, keeping one household. In 1536 Mary's mother, the luckless Catherine of Aragon, had died miserably at Kimbolton, almost alone and forgotten. Mary was not allowed to go to her mother's death-bed, which she never forgave and which she attributed with good reason to Anne Boleyn's malignant influence with the King.

Elizabeth's mother, that same gay, ruthless Anne Boleyn, was beheaded less than six months after Catherine's death. Within a few days Henry married her maid-of-honour, Jane Seymour ; that fair, humble goose of a girl who apparently said so little worth recording and accomplished nothing but one sickly son, the future Edward VI.

The two-year-old Elizabeth was degraded at her mother's shameful death to the same level of legislated illegitimacy as Mary had incurred in the terms of Catherine's divorce. But while Mary had been thirteen when her mother's troubles began and had suffered for her violent championing of Catherine's cause (and her own) the swift injustice which ended Anne Boleyn's brief eminence left Elizabeth a stranded, uncomprehending babe in the nursery.

Edward's birth about eighteen months after Henry's marriage to Jane emphasized the unimportance of the two daughters as heirs, though they had already been stripped of their royal titles and prerogatives. Henry's will included them in the succession, but from Edward's birth till the King's death in 1547, about ten years, their lives consisted of strange ups and downs, lived now together and now apart, now at Court and now at some obscure country house designated for their use ; sometimes with hardly enough money in their privy purses to keep their modest households from actual want.

Late in 1539 Mary at twenty-three was obliged to write to Cromwell requesting that he use his influence with her father to increase the forty pounds she received quarterly, "seeing this quarter of Christmas is more chargeable than the rest," and adding plaintively that she was ashamed always to be a beggar but the occasion was such that she could not choose. As this was while the two girls were together at Hertford, it is probable that Elizabeth was living more or less at Mary's expense during an ebb in her own fortunes, and they shared a common want. There are records of Mary's having supplied the child with small sums during these years.

Page 13. Elizabeth's shabbiness. "An old tradition, once known in Hunsdon, was to the effect that 'little Elizabeth had no shoes for three months, and was in

tattered garments like a peasant child.' " Burke. *The following letter was written by Lady Bryan to Cromwell from Hunsdon, in 1536, when Elizabeth was less than three years old. The original was much damaged in the Cottonian MSS. fire, and this version is taken from Ellis' restoration.* " My lord, when your Lordyschep was last here, et pleased yow to say, that I should not mestrust the Kyng's Grace, nor your Lordyschep, which word was mor comfort to me than I can wryt, as God knoweth. And now et boldethe me to shew yow my powr mynd. My Lord, when my Lady Marys Grace was born, et pleased the Kyngs Grace to appoint me Lady Mastres ; and made me a Barones. And so I have ben a [mother ?] to the children his Grace have had sens. Now et es so, my Lady Elizabeth is put from that degré she was afore ; and what degré she is at now, I know not bot by heryng say ; therefor I know not how to order her, nor myself, nor non of hirs that I have the rewle of : that is, her women & har gromes : besyching yow to be good Lord to my Lady & to al hers. And that she may have som rayment ; for she hath neither gown nor kertel, nor potecot, nor no manner of linnen for smokes,² nor cerchifos, nor sleeves, nor rayls, nor body-styckets, nor handeckerchers, nor mofelers, nor begens. All thys har Grace Mostake,³ I have dreven off as long as I can, that be my trothe I cannot drive it no longer : besyching yow, my Lord, that ye wel see that her Grace may have that es nedful for har, as my trost es ye wel do. . . . My Lord, Master Shelton⁴ wold havo my Lady Elizabeth to dino & sup ever day at the bord of Astat.⁵ Alas ! my Lord, it is not meet for a child of har ag, to kepe sych rewle yet. I promese you, my Lord, I dare not take et upon me to kepe har Grace in helthe, & she keepe that rule : for there she shal se dyvers mets & freuts and wine ; which would be hard for me to refrayn her Grace from et. Ye know, my Lord, there is no place of corekcyon⁶ ther. And she es yet to young to correct greatly. I know wel & she be ther, I shal nether bryng her up to the Kings Graces honour, nor hers ; nor to har helthe nor my pore honesty. Wherfore I shew your Lordyschep this my descharge, besyching you my Lord that my Lady may have a mess of met to har owen lodgyng, with a good dish or two, that is meet for her to et of. . . . God knoweth, my Lady hath great pain with her great teeth, and they come very slowly forth : and causeth me to suffer her Grace to have her wil more than I would ; I trust to God and her teeth were well graft to have her Grace after another fashion that she is yet ; so I trust the Kings Grace shall have great comfort in her Grace. For she is as toward a Child and as gentle of conditions, as ever I kne ene⁷ in my leyf. Jesu preserve her Grace. . . ."

P. 16. Mary's confession. " While her mother lived, she was utterly inflexible ; neither bribes nor the deadliest menaces could shake her firmness into the slightest admission which could compromise that beloved mother's honour." *Strickland.*

P. 19. The cambric shirt. *There is a list of New Year's gifts to Prince Edward in the Cottonian MSS.* " The King and his nobles gave principally plate. The Lady Mary's Grace gave a coat of crimson satten embroidered with gold, with paunies of pearls and sleeves of tinsel, and four aglets of gold. The Lady Elizabeth's Grace gave ' A shyrte of Cam'yeke of her owne woorkyng.' " *Ellis.*

P. 21. Wriothesley's letter. *Strickland.*

The gold chain. " Item : I ordayne that the collar of Gould which I brought out of Spayne be to my Daughter." *Catherine's will, Cottonian MSS.*

P. 23. The executioner's sword. " On the xix of May Queene Anne was on a Scaffold (made for that purpose) upon the greene within the Tower of London, beheaded with the sword of Calais, by the handes of the hangman of that Towne." *Stowe.* " As it was the King's pleasure that his conjugal victim should be decollated with a sword after the French manner of execution, the headsman of Calais was brought over to England for the purpose, a man who was considered remarkably expert at his horrible calling." *Strickland.*

¹ illegible.

² smocks.

³ must take.

⁴ The Governor of the Household.

⁵ board of state.

⁶ correction.

⁷ any.

P. 25. Catherine's confessor. Hume reprints some contemporary correspondence long hidden in the library at Simancas and now available in the Spanish Calendar, which shows that there was considerable scandal and worry about Diego at the time.

Elizabeth's drilled mind. It must be remembered that children's intelligences were forcibly developed at an earlier age in the sixteenth century. Edward could parrot Latin at four; Elizabeth was translating fluently at ten, which indicates considerable reasoning power at very tender years.

P. 27. The Duke of Bavaria must have been rather a gallant gentleman. Shortly after Wriothesley's visit to Hertford Mary removed to Enfield and was persuaded to receive the Duke privately, much against her will. He conversed with her in Latin, which they both knew; and in German, with an interpreter, when his Latin gave out, or his feelings ran away with him. He presented her with a diamond cross, kissed her affectionately (to the scandal of Marillac, the French ambassador, who seems to have known all that went on in England, and guessed the rest) and declared himself well satisfied, even impatient. Mary became ill of excitement and apprehension, and passed New Year's Day in bed at Blackfriars. This marriage fell through like many another, until Mary was thirty-eight and Queen in her own right. She returned his diamond cross. And Duke Philip, whether out of constancy or obstinacy or sheer bad luck, died a bachelor in 1548.

P. 29. Henry's poem. *Trefusis Collection*, pub. 1912.

P. 31. "...that strange historical phenomenon, the conscience of Henry VIII..." Innes. Speed's account of the Divorce relates that Henry "without all exception injoyed her nuptiall societie the space almost of twentie yeeres; in which time shee had borne him two sonnes, both of them in their infancy taken away by death, and a Daughter, Lady Mary, growne now unto tenne yeeres of age. But the scruples of Conscience increasing more tender in the King's brest, he first refused the Queene's bed; and then moving the doubt unto his own Divines, sent for the opinions of the most Universities in Europe. . . ." Speed then prints in detail the King's eloquent speech to the Divorce Court during the trial in 1528, in which Henry asserted that "the chiefest motive for this matter, was the scruple of conscience conceived upon certaine words spoken by the Bishop of Bayon, the French Ambassador, sent from the King to conclude a marriage betwixt Prince Henry his second Sonne, Duke of Orleancc, and our onely Daughter Lady Mary, which Bishop made doubt, and desired respit to be satisfied for the legitimation of our said Daughter, in respect of our marriage with this Woman, being my owne Brother's Wife, which presently engendered such scruples and doubts in me, that my conscience hath beene continually vexed, lest by continuing in that sinne after knowledge, I draw Gods indignation against mee, which I feare we have already done, in that hee hath sent us no Issue-Male, and them that were begot in this Nuptial-bed no sooner came into the World, but were taken againe thence, & hopelesse now of more Issue by her, it behoveth me to consider the state of this Realm & the danger that may follow for lack of a lawfull Prince to succeed. This burden too weighty for my weak conscience (not in any dislike of the Queens age, or person, with whom I desire onely to continue, if our Marriage may stand with the Law of God) I have in this place assembled you our grave Prelates, and learned Divines, to determine of, and will (God willing) submit myself to your judgements."

"The divorce excited the greatest interest among all sorts and conditions of people in England. The women, from high to low, took the part of the Queen." Strickland. Burke.

P. 32. The word bastard. Stone reprints a despatch from Chapuys to Charles V in December 1533: "According to the determination come to by the King which I wrote in my last, the said bastard was taken three days ago to a house seventeen miles from here [Hatfield] and although there was a shorter and better road, yet for greater solemnity, and to insinuate to the people that she is the true Princess, she was taken through this town [London] with the company I wrote in my last; and next day, the Duke of Norfolk went to the Princess to tell her that her father desired her to go to the court and service of the said bastard, whom he named Princess."

Anne's treatment of Mary is mentioned in another despatch from the same source written before Elizabeth's birth : " . . . for it is to be feared that the moment this accursed Anne sets her foot firmly in the stirrup she will try to do the Queen all the harm she possibly can, and the Princess also, which is the thing your aunt dreads most. Indeed, I hear she has lately boasted that she will make of the Princess a maid-of-honour in her royal household, that she may perhaps give her too much dinner on some occasion, or marry her to some varlet, which would be an irreparable evil." It must be remembered that Chapuys was violently prejudiced.

P. 34. *Elizabeth's letter is given by Leti. (Trans. E. T.)*

P. 35. *The yellow kirtle.* "Mary received many New Year's gifts, and was very liberal in her distribution of presents, especially to her sister Elizabeth, to whom she gave a yellow satin kirtle made with five yards of satin at 7s. 6d. the yard. The princess Mary in her own hand, has marked against the item, 'For a kirtle for my lady Elizabeth's grace.' " Strickland. Madden.

P. 36. *Mourning for Jane.* "Whilst the deceased queen lay in state in Hampton Court Chapel, the Princess Mary appeared as chief mourner at dirges and masses, accompanied by her ladies and those of the royal household. She knelt at the head of the coffin, habited in black ; a white handkerchief was tied over her head, and hung down. All the ladies, similarly habited, knelt about the queen's coffin in 'lamentable wise.' The Princess caught cold at these lugubrious vigils, performed in November nights ; the King sent his surgeon, Nicholas Simpson, to draw one of her teeth, for which service she paid him the enormous fee of six angels." Strickland. *An angel was about 7s. 6d.*

Henry's French marriage aspirations. ". . . though Mlle. de Guise's picture was sent over to him, he was not satisfied with the painter's representation of her person ; resolving to trust no body's eyes but his own in the matter. With this in view, he propos'd a conference near Calais, and that Francis should bring with him thither the two young princesses in question, with some other of the first ladies in France, that he might choose her which best struck his fancy ; but the King of France though labouring at that time to make a stricter alliance with England and to cement it by a marriage between the Princess Mary and the Duke of Orleans, would not agree to the proposal ; thinking it too gross an indignity to be put upon ladies of the highest quality, to bring them, like mules, to a market to be delivered to the purchaser. Henry, understanding no decorum that clashed with his humour, still continu'd to insist on the interview ; but there was no getting over the difficulty." *Carte. Marie of Guise, whom Henry might have made Queen of England if he had been less finicky, soon married his nephew James V of Scotland. Their only surviving child was Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots.*

P. 37. "Holbein was not usually a flattering painter to his sisters, and the portrait he sent of Anne [of Cleves] was that of a somewhat masculine and large-featured but handsome and intellectual young woman, with fine, soft, contemplative brown eyes, thick lashes, and strong eyebrows. The general appearance is dignified, though handicapped by the very unbecoming Dutch dress of the period ; and though there is nothing of the petite sprightliness and soft rotundity that would be likely to attract a man of Henry's characteristics, the Princess cannot have been ill-favoured." Hume.

"She occupyleth her time mostly with her needle . . . she can read and write (Dutch) ; but as to French, Latin, or any other language, she hath none. Nor yet she cannot sing nor play any instrument, for they take it here in Germany for a rebuke, and an occasion of lightness that great ladies should be learned or have any knowledge of music. Her wit is good, and she will no doubt learn English very soon when she puts her mind to it . . ." *Hume's reprint of a despatch from Henry's ambassador, Nicholas Wolton.*

Arthur's meeting with Catherine. Hume.

P. 40. *This Francis of Lorraine became the husband of Christina of Milan.*

P. 41. *Anne's future in England.* "The Lady Anne of Cleves, once King Henry's Wife, but divorced, was still alive, living in England upon her Dowry, and as it seems in good Reputation. She hadd lands in Bisham, which were those, I suppose, formerly belonging to the Monastery there; and at Bletchingley, where she had a House, and sometimes dwelt. She seemed to be a Lady of good Behaviour, and of an obliging Carriage; bearing a very friendly Correspondence with the Lady Mary, as well as with the other Ladies of the Court. She spoke, or at least Writ, English very well, as appears by her Letter underwritten; Which she writ upon certain Business happening between the Lady Mary and her, occasioned by a Change of Lands the King made this Year, both with her and with his sister." *Strype in 1551. Details of Annie's story are to be found in Strickland and Hume.*

Catherine Howard. Her father's sister was Anne Boleyn's mother. In other words, Anne was niece to Norfolk by his sister (Elizabeth), Catherine by his brother (Edmund).

P. 42. *Francis I's mistress at this time was Anne de Pisseleu, Duchesse d'Étampes. His first wife Claude died in 1524, and in 1530 he had married Eleanor, a sister to Charles V.*

Dowager Duchess of Norfolk. Agnes Tylney, 2nd wife of the 2nd Duke.

P. 51. *The Howard lineage.* "Anne was descended through both parents from the royal stock of King Edward I; paternally from Elizabeth, daughter of that monarch, and maternally from Thomas de Brotherton, Earl of Norfolk, son of the same King." *Wriothesley Chronicle note.* Burke comments on the family propensity for *belles lettres* and rich marriages.

NOTES TO PART TWO

Henry VIII died in January 1547, and Jane Seymour's son, an unhealthy boy of nine, was immediately crowned as Edward VI. Two months later Francis I died at Rambouillet, to be succeeded by his son Henry II, aged twenty-nine. The Emperor Charles V alone survived of the three great enemies whose pussy-wants-a-corner quarrels and reconciliations had kept all Europe giddy for a quarter of a century. He was forty-seven. His brother Ferdinand ruled Germany; his sister Mary was Regent of the Netherlands; his son Philip had been married to the Infanta of Portugal and was a widower, destined for the throne of Spain. The Hapsburgs were fairly in the saddle. In Scotland Mary Stuart, not yet five years of age, was Queen, with her mother, Marie of Guise and Lorraine, and the Earl of Arran as Regents. All Henry's efforts to marry her to Edward had failed, and she was betrothed to the Dauphin, who would be briefly known as Francis II.

Henry's will provided for a well-balanced Council of sixteen peers to rule until his frail son should be eighteen years old. But Jane Seymour's two brothers, Edward and Thomas, made the most of their new advantages as the King's uncles, and the balance of power planned by Henry remained a theory only.

Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, appropriated the title of Protector, assumed control of the Council, and made himself Duke of Somerset. His younger brother Thomas became Lord Seymour of Sudeley, and Lord Admiral of England. Wriothesley, Lord Chancellor, treading a slippery eminence, was created Earl of Southampton, but was soon elbowed out of prominence by the Protestant element. Dudley, Viscount Lisle, secured a jealous increase of rank as Earl of Warwick. And William Parr, Earl of Essex (brother to the Queen), became the Marquis of Northampton. Of the old régime these five, and Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, remained at the helm; and a new man, William Cecil, was advancing by devious and tactful ways as Somerset's secretary.

The rest of Henry's carefully devised Council squabbled round the edges without much effect—Paget, Secretary of State; Paulet, Marquis of Winchester; Sir Anthony Browne, etc. Gardiner had been omitted from this list by Henry himself, and his Catholic convictions soon brought him to the Tower. Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel, was left a legacy and no official position, a poor return for generations of

faithful service to the Crown, and a long personal friendship with the King. And within the charmed inner circle the brothers Seymour watched each other with a deep suspicion.

Catherine Parr, thanks to her own miraculous tact and her soothing presence in a sick-room, circumvented a deliberate plot against her life by Gardiner and Wriothesley as the leaders of the Catholic party, and survived the King; as did also the almost forgotten Anne of Cleves in her amiable retirement at Richmond. Elizabeth, not quite fourteen, a long, pale, observant creature with a certain hawk-like beauty of her own, was lodged by the Council in Catherine's widowed household at Chelsea, maintaining an establishment of her own within that of her stepmother. Mrs. Ashley, another connection of Anne Boleyn's, was her governess now.

Mary remained in retirement in the country with her own establishment and servants, on a separate allowance provided by the King's will. Edward, smothered in tutors and fenced off by the jealous Council, held Court in London or at Greenwich. His sisters were allowed to see very little of him. It was not a part of Warwick's plans, at least, that the affection between the King's children should grow out of bounds; it is probable that he had his own ideas about the succession from the very beginning.

Sometime in the early summer after Henry's death, Catherine Parr, still in her young thirties and handsome in a bright, bird-like way, snatched bravely at belated happiness and secretly married her former suitor, Thomas Seymour, who seems to have been faithful to her, in his fashion, during her three perilous years of marriage with the King.

August 1547 found an odd family in the dower-house at Chelsea—motherly Catherine, in love and radiant with happiness at last; Seymour, one of the handsomest noblemen in England and not yet forty; and Elizabeth.

P. 53. Seymour's intrusions. "She saith at Chelsoy, incontinent after he was married to the Queen, he wold come many Mornyngs into the said Lady Elizabeth's Chamber, before she were redy, and sometyme before she did rise. And if she were up, he wold bid her good Morrow, and ax how she did, and strike her upon the Bak or on the Buttocks famylearely, and so go forth through his Lodgings; and sometyme go through to the Maydens, and play with them, and so go forth: And if she were in her Bed, he wold put open the Curteyns, and bid her good Morrow, and make as though he would come at her: And she wold go further in the Bed, so that he could not come at her. . . . At Hanworth, he wold likewise come in the Mornynge unto her Grace; but as she remembreth, at all Tymes, she was up before, sayng two Mornyngs, the which two Mornyngs, the Quene came with hym: . . . An other Tyme at Chelsoy the Lady Elizabeth heryng the Pryvie-Lock undo, knowyng that he wold come in, ran out of her Bed to her Maydens, and then went behynd the Curteyn of the Bed, the Maydens beyng there; and my Lord tarried to have hyr com out, she cannot tell how long. . . . And then in the Galery this Examinate told my Lord that thes Things were complayned of, and that my Lady was evill spoken of: The Lord Admiral swore, God's precious Soule! he wold tell my Lord Protector how yt slawnderid hym, and he wold not leave it, for he ment no Evill. . . ." *Mrs. Ashley's Confession, Haynes.* (*Some of the time Elizabeth spent in the Queen's care was passed at Catherine's other house at Hanworth, mention of which I have omitted from the text for simplicity's sake.*)

P. 54. The Protector. "To this office he was deemed most fit, for that he was the King's uncle by the Mother's side, very near unto him in bloud, but yet of no capacite to succeed; by reason whereof his naturall affection and dutie was lesse easie to be over-carriyed by Ambition." *Hayward.*

Edward's religious tendencies. "He gave very many indications of a good disposition to Learning, and of a most wonderful probity of mind, and above all, of a great respect to Religion, and everything relating to it." *Burnet.* "Such was the Piety of this young Prince that being about to take down something, which was above his reach, one of his Playfellows proffered Him a bossed plated Bible to stand upon, and heighthen Him to take what He desired. Perceiving it a Bible, with holy Indignation He refused it, and sharply reproved the Offerer thereof;

* slandered,

it being unfit, He should trample that under His feet, which He was to treasure up in His head and heart. How many now adayes unable in themselves to atchieve their own wicked ends, make God's Word their Pedestall, that standing thereon they may be (not the holier, but) the higher, and the better advantaged, by abusing a piety, to attain their own designs." *Heylin.*

The scene at Enfield. "Upon which tidings they both broke forth into such unforced and unfained passions, as it plainly appeared that good nature did work in them beyond all other respects. Never was sorrow more sweetly set forth, their faces seeming rather to beautifie their sorrow, than their sorrow to cloud the beautie of their faces. Their young yeares, their excellent beauties, their lovely and lively interchange of complaints, in such sort graced their grieve, as the most yronies¹ at that time present were drawne thereby into the societie of their teares." *Hayward.*

P. 56. Seymour's marriage offer. *Leti prints in full a letter in reply from Elizabeth, which has disappeared:* "My lord Admiral: There could not be found in all the world a more obliging or more eloquent letter than yours, and since I do not feel capable of making an adequate reply to so many courtesies, I must content myself with proving to you in a few simple words the great sincerity of my sentiments. I confess to you that your letter, charming as it is, has greatly surprised me, since, aside from the fact that I have neither the age nor the inclination to think of marriage, I should never have expected to find myself asked to a wedding at a time when I can only weep for the death of my father. Too great, my lord, is the obligation which I owe to him to mourn his death for less than two years; and how shall I persuade myself to tread the path that leads to wifehood, until I have enjoyed for a few years the state of maidenhood, or until I have attained the years of discretion? Therefore, my lord Admiral, permit me to say frankly that since there is no one in the world who holds your great merit in higher esteem than I do, nor finds greater pleasure in your society while I may regard you as a disinterested friend—I shall continue to preserve the satisfaction of looking upon you as such, apart from that closer intimacy of marriage, which often causes the possession of personal merits to be forgotten. Let your lordship be persuaded that if I refuse the good fortune of being your wife, I shall never cease to interest myself in all which may add greater glory to yourself, and that I shall make it my greatest pleasure to remain, Your servitor and good friend, ELIZABETH. 27 February, 1547." (*Trans. E. T.*) *Seymour's letter to which this is a reply, also given by Leti, is very gracefully and ardently worded, as are his letters to Catherine Parr written immediately afterward which are still to be seen in the original (Tytler).*

P. 57. Henry's will. See note to page 133.

Catherine and Seymour. "The Protector's brother Thomas Seymour was brought to such a share in his Fortunes that he was made a Baron and Lord Admiral. But this not satisfying his Ambition, he endeavoured to have linked himself to a nearer relation with the Crown by Marrying the King's Sister, the Lady Elizabeth. But finding he could not compass that, he made his addresses to the Queen Dowager, who enjoying now the Honour and Wealth the late King had left her, resolved to satisfy herself in her next choice, and entertained him a little too early, for they were married so soon after the King's death that if she had brought a child as soon as might have been after the Marriage, it had given cause to doubt whether it had not been by the late King, which might have raised a great disturbance afterwards; but being thus Married to the Queen, he concealed it for some time, till he procured a letter from the King recommending him to her for a Husband, upon which they declared their Marriage, with which the Protector was much offended." *Burnet.* "The Admiral's marrying of this Queen was laid to his Charge as a Point of his high Ambition, as was said before, tho' it seems by a Letter of her own Writing from Chelsey soon after her Marriage that she rather courted him, than he her: Professing that she loved him when she was Lord Latimer's Widow, and before King Henry made her his Wife; and therefore being at first very listless towards the Royal Match." *Strype.*

¹ erroneous.

THE TUDOR WENCH

P. 58. *Fernando Aubrey.* A page boy in Elizabeth's household at the time of the Seymour scandal. Burke says: "At this time Elizabeth manifested the qualities of a good-natured and warm-hearted girl, who was not, it is true, indifferent to the admiration of her handsome page, Fernando Aubrey. . . . Aubrey was later drowned in the Thames. He was deeply regretted by his royal mistress, who spoke of him some forty years later with feelings of affection." Fernando's ancestry is uncertain, but it appears that he may have been the son of one of the Spanish attendants of Catherine of Aragon.

P. 67. *Fencing masters and the coup de Jarnac.* Powell. Larousse.

P. 68. *Elizabeth's legacy.* Henry left each of his daughters £3000 to live on, and £10,000 at marriage. "I have known many a Noble Man's Daughter left as great a Legacie, nay, a larger Dower, who never had any claime or alliance to a Crowne; but so it pleased the King at that time." Heywood.

P. 90. "Jill, gill. A familiar or contemptuous term applied to a woman." Oxford Dictionary. The word contained the unpleasant sense since attached to "wench," which was then in common or affectionate use.

P. 94. *Seymour's machinations with Edward.* "At another Tyme within this two Yere at lest, he sayd, ye must take apon you yourself to rule, for ye shall be hable enough as well as other Kyngs; and than yo may geve your Men sumwhat; for your Unkell is olde, and I trust wyll not lyve long. I answered, it were better that he shuld dye. Then he sayd, ye ar but even a very boggarly Kyng now, ye have not¹ to play or to geve to your Servaunts. I sayd, Mr. Stanop had for me. Then he sayd, he wold geve Fowler Money for me, and so he dyd, as Fowler told me. And he gave Cheke Money, as I bad him; and also to a Boke-Bynder² as Belmayn can tell; and to dyverso others at that Tyme, I remembre not to whom. . . . At the return of my Lord my Uncle, the Lord Admirall sayl, I was to bashfull in myne owne Matters, and asked me, why did I not speake to beare Rule, as other Kyngs do. I sayd, I needed not, for I was well enough." Edward's Confession. Haynes.

P. 95. *The Latin sermon is from a facsimile in Chamberlin.*

P. 96. *Catherine's inopportune entrance.* "I do remembre also she [Mrs. Ashley] told me, that the Admirall loved her [Elizabeth] but to well and hadd so done a good while; and that the Quene was jelousw on hir and him, in so moche that, one Tyme the Quene, suspecting the often Accesse of the Admirall to the Lady Elizabeth's Grace cam sodenly upon them, wher they were all alone, he having her in his Armes: wherfore the Quene fell out, both with the Lord Admirall and with her Grace also. And hereupon the Quene called Mrs. Ashley to her and told her Fansy in that Matier; and of this was moche Displeasure. And it was not long, before they partid asondre their Famylies; and as I remembre, this was the Cause why she was sent from the Quene; or ells that her Grace partid from the Quene; I do not perfectly remembre wether of both she said, she went of herself, or was sent awaye. . . ." Parry's Confession. Haynes.

P. 97. *Catherine's death.* "She then haveyn my Lord Admyrall by the Hand, and dyvers other standyng by, spake thos Wardys,³ partly as I tooke yt, idilly, My Lady Tyrwhyte, I am not wel handelyd, for thos that be abowt me caryth not for me, but standyth lawghyng⁴ at my Gref; and the moor Good I wyl to them, the les Good they wyl to me: Whorunto my Lord Admyrall answeryd, Why Swet-Hart, I wold you no hurt. And she saed to hym ugnyn alowt, No my Lord, I thinke so; and imedyetly she sayed to hym in hye Fre, but, my Lord, you have geven me many shrowd⁵ tauntes." Lady Tyrwhit's Confession. Haynes.

Catherine's child. There is some dissension as to the fate of little Mary Seymour.

¹ (money) to gamble.
⁴ laughing.

² book-binder.
⁵ shrewd,

³ words.

Strickland says that while the attainder of her father deprived her of Sudeley and his other estates, she was still entitled to the large fortune of her mother. Somerset's promise to settle for her maintenance was never fulfilled, and her childhood was spent in the grudging care of the Dowager Duchess of Suffolk,¹ in whose household she was apparently destitute of the barest necessities. The Dowager Duchess married again, and there the actual history of the child ceases. Strype, however, thought that she died in her early teens, and Tytler insists that she did not survive infancy. Strickland presents the alternative of some obscure unrecorded marriage.

P. 98. *Elizabeth's letter. Strickland. Denny was Governor of her household at this time.*

P. 99. *Seymour's letter. Tytler.*

Somerset's letter. Tytler. "The Admiral was certainly an evil Man, turbulent and full of ambitious Designs from the Beginning of this King's Reign. And his Brother the Duke did often advise him, and earnestly dissuade him from his dangerous courses, and used all the fairest Means with him, pardoning what was past, and (that he might meet with his high Mind) gratifying him with Possessions, and the High and honourable Office of Lord Admiral. Yet he was continually practicing after this; he raised Soldiers, and threatened he would make the blackest Parliament that ever was in England. He is suspected to have poisoned his Wife, that Excellent Woman, Queen Catherine, that being single he might make his Addresses to the Lady Elizabeth, the King's Sister. So that, in fine, the Parliament did judge these things to be a traitorous aspiring to the Crown." *Strype.* Nevertheless, *Somerset's name heads all the rest on Seymour's execution warrant, as reprinted in Burnet.*

P. 100. *Seymour's deal with Dorset.* "The Lorde Marques Dorset saith that he was fully determined that his Doughter the Lady Jane shuld no more com to remaine with the Lord Admirall. How be it my Lord Admirall himself came unto his House, and was so earnest with him in Persuasione, that he colde not resist him. Emongs² the which Persuasions one was, that he wold marye hir to the King's Majestie; sayeng ferther, that if he might get the King at Libertie he durst warrant the said Lorde Marques that the King shuld marye his said Daughter. . . . Warforre as it wer for an ernest Peny³ of the Favour that he wold shewe unto him, when the said Lord Marques had sent his Doughter to the said Lord Admirall, he sent unto the said Lord Marques immediately £500. Parcell of the £2000 which he promised to lend unto him, and wold have axed no Bond of him at all for it, but only to have had the Lord Marques Doughter for a Gage." *Dorset's Confession. Haynes.* *Lady Jane seems to have been residing with Seymour's mother at his town palace, Bath House, Strand, while Elizabeth was in Catherine's charge at Chelsea.* Also see note to page 133.

P. 101. *Seymour's marriage plans.* "Another Tyme I asked her,⁴ what News was at London; and she sayd, that the Voyce went ther, that my Lord Admirall shuld marry me: Then I smyled at yt, and sayd, yt was but a London News." *Elizabeth's Confession. Haynes.*

Parry and Elizabeth. "Whereupon, casting in my Mynde the Reportes whiche I hadd harde of a Marege betwixt them; and that att all other Tymes, when by ony Chaunce talke shuld be of the Lord Admirall, she shewid suche Contenaunce that it shuld appere she was very gladd to here of him, and especially wold shew Countenans of Gladdnes, when he was well spoken of, I toke Occasion to ask her, whither if the Counsaill wold like it she wold marye with hym; To the which she answered, when that comes to passe, I will do as God shall putt my Mynde." *Parry's Confession. Haynes.* "Another Tyme, he asked me wether, yf the Counsell dyd consent thereto, to hav my Lord Admyral, wether I wold consent or no. Then I asked hym what he ment to aske me that, or who bad him say so: He answered that no Body bad hym say so; but that he gethered by hys [the Admiral's] askyng

¹ Catherine Willoughby.

² Among.

³ a guarantee.

⁴ Mrs. Ashley;

of theys Questyons before, that he ment some sych Thynge ; Thene I sayd yt was but hys fowlych¹ gethoryngo." *Elizabeth's Confession. Haynes.*

P. 102. Somersct and Seymour. "As the Duke was elder in yeeres, so was he more stayed in behaviour. The Lord Sudley was fierce in courage, courtly in fashion, in person stately, in voice magnificent, but somewhat empty of matter. . . . The Duke was greatest in favor with the people, the lord Sudley most respected by the Nobility ; both highly esteemed by the King, both fortunate alike in their advancements, both ruined alike by their owne vanity and folly. Whilest these two brothers held in amity, they were like two armes, the one defending the other, and both of them the King. But many things did move together to dissolve their love, and bring them to ruine. First their contrary disposition, the one being tractable and mild, the other stiffe and impatient of a superiour ; whereby they lived but in cunning concord, as brothers glued together, but not united in graine : Then much secret envie was borne against them, for that their new lustre did dimme the light of men honoured with ancient Nobility. Lastly they were openly minded, as hasty and soone moved, so uncircumspect, and easie to be minded." *Hayward.* "Comparing them together we may find . . . the Lord Protectour to be more desired for a Friend ; the Lord Admiral to be more feared for an Enemy. Betwixt them both, they might have made one excellent man ; if the Defects of each being taken away, the Virtues only had remained." *Hrylyn.*

P. 104. Tyrwhit to Somersct All this correspondence and that of Elizabeth to Somerset is taken from Haynes, which is practically the only source of any detailed information on the Scymour business. The excerpts are necessarily much curtailed.

P. 106. Elizabeth's letter. Haynes.

P. 107. Parry's account of Catherine Ashley's revelations. "But after that she hadd told me the Tale of the fynding her Grace in his Armes, she seemed to repent, that she hadd gone so farre with me, as she did ; and prayed me in ony² wise that I wold not disclose thes Matters : And I said I wold not. And agayne she prayed me not to open yt, as ever she myght do for me ; for her Grace shuld be dishonored for ever and she likowise undone. And I said I wold not ; and I said, I had rather be pulld with Horses, thone I wold ; or such like Words." *Haynes.*

P. 110. Henry's popularity. "This King, notwithstanding his rigorous Government, and his round Dealing with many, to the taking away of their Lives, lived and died highly beloved of his Subjects ; whatever were the Reasons of it." *Strype.* *Elizabeth's lett.* *Lansdowne MSS.*

P. 112. Edward and Seymour. Burnet quotes Edward's speech to the Council with regard to Seymour's sentence : "We perceiveth that therre are many Things objected and laid to my Lord Admiral my Uncle, and that they tend to Treason, and we perceive that you require but Justice to be done. We think it reasonable, and We Will, that you prooced according to your Request." This is probably a fair sample of the parrot speeches put into his mouth by his advisors.

Seymour's trial and death. "His owne fierce courage hastened his death, because equally ballanced betwene doubt and disdaino, he was desirous rather to dye at once, than to linger long upon courtosie and in feare. The accusations against him contained much frivilous matter, or term them pitifull, if you please. The Act of Parliament expresseth these causes of his attainder : For attempting to get into his custody the person of the King, and government of the Realme. For making much provision of mony and of victuals : For endevouring to marry; the Lady Elizabeth, the King's Sister : For perswading the King in his tender Age to take upon him the rule and order of himselfe. The proofes might easily bee made, because he was never called to his answer : but as well the protestations at the point of his death, as the open course and carriage of his life, cheered him in opinion of many. So doubtfull are all weighty matters, whilst some take all

¹ foolish.

² any.

they heare for certaine ; others making question of any truths ; posterity enlarging both." *Hayward.* To which *Strype replies directly, in his perennial quarrel with Hayward* : "What his Protestations were, I know not, nor do I know any History that relates them ; any more than that Stow writ that he took it on his Death, that he had never committed nor meant Treason to the King or Realm. The contrary to which, his Deeds declared : and he confessed himself in the Tower, that he would have had the Government of the King's Person. But the Course and Carriage of his Life, I am sure, could not clear him, having during all this Reign lived so known a turbulent and vicious Life."

Tytler's opinion of the Seymour affair is as follows : "Had the same sharp eyes and scandalous tongues which busied themselves about Mary, her rival Queen, been as active in prying into and exaggerating the early coquetry of Elizabeth, we should have had many strange tales ; and yet an examination of Haynes must convince us, that although scandalous reports were circulated, of which the Princess herself complains, there was no real foundation for them—nothing but the coarse romping of the times—a sort of semi-barbarous feudal flirtation."

NOTES TO PART THREE

As the year 1549 progressed, the Duke of Somerset daily increased in arrogance and power, until he ruled "as if anointed." His growing eminence went to his head entirely. He began the building of a magnificent new palace in the Strand, pulling down a chapel and desecrating graves in the process ; he also gave orders that St. Margaret's, Westminster, was to be demolished for building materials, but the church was saved by its parishioners, who armed themselves and drove off his workmen. Murmurs were going round too against his inhuman behaviour toward his brother Thomas, though probably no amount of effort on Somerset's part could have saved the Lord Admiral once the tide turned against him, for Warwick was determined upon the overthrow of both brothers. Still, the Duke had failed to make the gesture.

In the summer there were dangerous uprisings in the North, ruthlessly put down by Somerset's rival councillor, Dudley, Earl of Warwick ; and in Devon Lord Russell led an army against the rebel peasantry and inflicted murderous reprisals. The demonstrations came partly of the increasingly Protestant trend of the Government, and partly of abuses committed by the landed proprietors on the working and farming classes. Times were very bad. It was a lean year all round, in England. Food was scarce, prices were high, good laws were not enforced, and there was interference amounting to downright persecution in religious matters.

Somerset drew Edward more and more into retirement, fearful of possible outside influences, especially from Warwick. September 1549 found the twelve-year-old King a peevish, bewildered captive, none too well, living at Hampton Court under Somerset's jealous eye, while the Warwick faction withdrew itself from Court, went armed in London, and held secret seditious meetings at Warwick's house in Holborn. Crammer, Paget, Cecil, and the faithful secretary Smith remained at Somerset's side, counselling first armed resistance and then complete surrender. The Duke wrote frantic, pitiful letters and sent them to the secessionists in London by men who deserted one by one to the rival cause. Edward was hurried by night to Windsor, where it would have been possible for Somerset to stand a siege, and the child caught a bad cold on the way and complained that Windsor was like a prison. Warwick demanded what was virtually abdication of the Protector, and with Russell's victorious western army at his back, promised personal safety ; then Paget turned traitor, and the Protector was openly arrested at Windsor and conveyed to the Tower, in October.

Once on top, Protector in everything but name, Warwick broke all his promises of lenience to his prisoner, and even his colleagues soon found him quite as despotic in intention as Somerset had ever been. Somerset saved himself from the block by the most abject capitulation, and in February 1550 he was released with a heavy fine and under some restraint. The King's doings were now wholly dictated by Warwick. Later in the spring Somerset was readmitted to the Privy Council, and most of his lands restored to him ; in June peace was sealed between the two

rivals in true regal fashion by the marriage of Somerset's daughter to Warwick's eldest son John.

Elizabeth was in retirement at Hatfield and Ashridge, ill, and living down the Seymour affair. Her old tutor, Roger Ascham, wrote enthusiastically to Sturmius at Strasbourg of her learning and accomplishments.

Warwick had been bred a Catholic, and the party rejoiced at Somerset's fall. But Warwick perceived that Reform was in the air, and Elizabeth as the Protestant heiress was naturally a part of his plans. He summoned her to Court in March 1551, and at the same time called Mary to account for her nonconformity with the new religion.

P. 115. "March 17. The Lady Elizabeth, the King's Sister, rode through London into St. James's, the King's Palace, with a great Company of Lords, Knights, and Gentlemen ; and after her a great number of Ladies and Gentlemen on Horseback, about Two hundred. On the 19th she came from St. James's through the Park to the Court ; the way from the Park Gate to the Court spread with fine sand. She was attended with a very honourable Confluence of noble and worshipful persons of both Sexes, and received with much ceremony at the Court Gate." *Strype.*

P. 116. Somerset's fall. "These subjections, objections, dejections, of the Duke made a heavenly harmony in his enemies ears ; but they wrought such compassion with the King that forthwith he was released out of the Tower, his fines discharged, his goods and lands restored, except such as had been given away." *Hayward.* "And so this storm went over him much more gently than was expected ; but his Carriage in it was thought to have so little of the Hero that he was not much considered after this." *Burnet.* "Within a short time after, he was entertained and feasted by the King with great show of favour, and sworne again of the Privie Councill, at which time between him and the Lords perfect amity was made, or else a dissembling hate." *Hayward.*

*Elizabeth's letter. Cottonian MSS. The picture which accompanied it, probably a miniature, seems to have disappeared. As to the Latin tag, Wiesener adds an explanatory foot-note : "Bear uncomplaining what cannot be avoided. Elizabeth's memory is here at fault, the precept does not occur in Horace, but in the Sententiae of P. Syrus, v. 218. She has also substituted the word *vitari*, avoided ; for *mutari*, altered ; in the original text." It has been suggested that the quotation was culled from some commonplace book of phrases, as was the fashion.*

P. 117. Edward's habits. "He would sequester himself from all Companies, into some Chamber or Gallery, to learn without Book his lessons, with great Alacrity and Cheerfulness. If he spent more time in Play and Pastime than he thought was convenient, he would find fault with himself, and say, *We forget ourselves* (as Mr. Cheke reported of him) *that should not lose Substantia pro Accidente*. He used to pen Letters, both in English and Latin, as part of his Exercisos." *Strype.* "The King was now thirteen Years of Age, and by this Time understood Latin, spake it, wrot it, properly, skilfully, fluently, and all this with Judgment too. He made good Progress in the Greek Tongue, and with great Ease turned Latin into Greek. . . . Though there wanted not for some about his Person, who laboured to divert him from his Studios and Care of his Kingdom, to Pastime and Gayety, which therefore the graver Sort, as they had Opportunity, endeavoured to arm the King against." *Hayward.*

P. 118. The initials H and A are still there where she saw them.

P. 119. The new religion. "And in this Parliament the use of the Mass was cleene forbidden, and a booke made for the uniformitie of divine service, and the administration of the sacraments in the English tongue was published and set forth." *Grafton Chronicle.* "From the moment of the fall of the Catholic party early in 1550, a systematic persecution of the Princess Mary began. . . . To such an extent did this annoyance, which Somerset vainly tried to mitigate, go, that Charles V laid plans for Mary's escape from England, and threatened a war which only the outbreak of hostilities between him and France prevented." *Pollard.* (*There is, however, no evidence to support Pollard's statement that Somerset ever tried*

to intercede for Mary. On the contrary ; Miss Strickland publishes a protesting letter from Mary to him, and there is a letter in the Lansdowne MSS. in which Mary mentions " usurped power " and accuses the Council of having forgotten her father, " in makyng (as they call it) lawes, both cleane contrary to hys proceedyngs and wyll." This was in June 1549, a good three months before the Protector's sudden plunge from power ; it is a scribbled fragment, apparently a first draft of which her fair copy has been lost.) See Plate.

Religious views of Somerset and Warwick. " Of the men who helped to mould the English Church there is no one whose precise attitude is more difficult to determine than that of Protector Somerset. . . . If he believed in anything he believed in the supremacy of State over Church. His religion was for himself purely a matter of private judgment, for others apparently it was a matter for the State to decide ; in neither case did the priest enter much into the scheme." Pollard. " But the Earl of Warwick, finding the King so zealously addicted to the carrying on of the Reformation, that nothing could recommend anyone so much to him as the promoting it further would do, soon forsook the Popish Party and was seemingly the most earnest on a further Reformation that was possible." Burnet.

The Emperor and Mary. " But while the War went on the Emperor did cajole the King with the highest Complements possible, which always wrought much on him, and came in person into England to be installed Knight of the Garter, where a new League was concluded, by which, beside mutual assistance, a Match was agreed on between the Emperor and the Lady Mary, the King's only Child by his Queen, of whom he had no hopes of more Issue. This was sworn to on both hands, and the Emperor was obliged, when She was of Age, to marry Her, *Per verba de Praesenti*, under pain of Excommunication and the forfeiture of 1000000 Pounds." Burnet. *Needless to say, no such penalty was ever exacted.* Isabella brought Charles no kingdom, but had more than double Mary's fortune in ready money, according to Carte, who adds that her brother John offered her 900,000 crowns, and she would soon have children, whereas Mary was much too young for marriage. After the victory of Pavia Charles felt strong enough to do without the English alliance, and was in a hurry for heirs. Isabella was the daughter of another of his mother's sisters.

P. 120. Mary's letter. Foxe.

P. 121. Mary's visit to Court. " 18. The L. Mary my sister came to me at Wheatminster¹ wheare after salutacions she was called with my councl into a chambre, where was declared how long i had suffered her masse [against my will]² in hope of her reconciliation and how now being no hope wch i perceived by her lettres except i saw some short amendment, i could not beare it. She answered that her soul was god³ and her faith she would not chaung nor dissemble her opinion with contrary doinges. It was said I constrained not her faith, but willed her [not as a king to rule but]⁴ as a subject to obey., [or else i]⁵ And that her example might breed too much inconvenience.

19. Th' emperor's embassador came with a short messag frome his master of warre, if i wold not suffre his cosin the princess to use hir masse. To this was no aundswer given at this time [but the next].⁶

20. The bis.⁷ of Caunterbury, London, and Rochester did conclude to give license to sinne was sinne ; to suffre and winke at it for a time might be borne, so all hast possible might be used." Edward's Journal, March 1551. (Which was to say, that so long as they did not actually give Mary their permission to use the Mass they were not responsible to God or their consciences for what she did ; provided she was made to conform by some means as soon as possible.)

¹ The ancient palace of Westminster having been damaged by fire, Henry had shifted the royal residence to his new palace of Whitehall, but the old name of the adjacent ruin was used interchangeably.

² Words in brackets are interlined above and then crossed out.

³ God's.

⁴ Inserted above as an afterthought.

⁵ and ⁶ crossed out.

⁷ bishops.

P. 122. *Mary made another drastic declaration in August, lest Edward think she did not mean what she had said before the Council. The trouble was largely that she would not allow them to wink at it by worshipping behind closed doors.* “ . . . yf neither at my humble suite, nor for regard to the promise made to the Emperor, your Highness will suffer and beare with me, as you have done, tyll your Majestie may be a Judge herin yourself, and right understand their proceedings, (of which your goodness yet I despaire not,) otherwise, rather than to offend god and my consyencie I offer my body at your will, and death shall be more welcome than lyfe with a trowbled consyencie.” *Harscian MSS.*

Elizabeth at Court. “ I am sure, said he (and he that said it was about that time at Court, Tutor to the Lady Jane Grey),¹ that her Maidens Apparel which she used in King Edward’s Time made the Noblemen’s Daughters and Wives to be ashamed to be dressed and painted like Peacocks.” *Strype.*

Warwick and Somerset. “ Yet many doubted whether the Earle retained not some secret offence against the Duke, which if he did, it was most cunningly suppressed; doubtless, of all his vertues, he made best use of dissimulation: and as this friendship was drawne together by feare on both sides, so it was not like to be more durable than was the feare.” *Hayward.*

Elizabeth of France was not yet twelve. The usual quarrel over a dowry, as well as the King’s failing health, brought the negotiations to nothing. She became the third wife of Philip II of Spain in 1560, and was afterwards known as Isabella.

Elizabeth and Denmark. “ 19. Bortwick was sent to the King of Denmark with provy instructions for marriage of the L. Elizabeth to his sonne.” *Edward’s Journal, December 1550.* “ But it was propounded only and not persued, whether neglected by the former reason,² or intermitted by her own averseness from marriage we are yet to seek.” *Heylin.*

P. 123. *Edward and Elizabeth.* “ . . . and was in singular favour with Edward her brother (who never saluted her but he called her his sweet Sister ;).” *Camden.*

P. 124. *Cecil is the future Lord Burghley, the greatest minister of Elizabeth’s long reign.*

P. 125. *Cecil’s first wife was Mary Cheke, sister to Edward’s tutor. She died in 1544, and he married Mildred Cooke in 1545. Strype says that Ascham reckoned Lady Jane Grey and Lady Mildred Cecil “ (who spake and understood Greek as if it were English) to be the two learnedest Women in England; but gave the Lady Jane the Preference.”*

Cecil and the Dukes. “ The two Dukes of Northumberland and Somerset strived to wynne the Secretarie sure to them, both using him exceeding kindly, tempting him with great offers and gifts. He shew’d duty to both but wold not take gifts of neither, and so, though with difficulty, he carried himself even to both, all King Edward’s tyme.” *Collins.* “ Those facts are undonable; that Cecil’s earliest, warmest, and firmest patron was Somerset; that he left him in the toils at his hour of utmost need; and that he devoted himself with the utmost zeal to the service of his destroyer, the lofty and all grasping Northumberland.” *Tyller.* “ Most of Northumberland’s business passed through his hands, but he somehow contrived not to be personally identified with it.” *Hume.* (He inherited a fortune on his father’s death in 1552, and was an independently wealthy man.)

P. 126. *Robert Dudley. The future Earl of Leicesters. He attained the coveted post of gentleman-of-the-bedchamber to the King about this time, and was also Master of the Buckhounds.*

P. 128. *Edward’s Journal.* This pitiful and illuminating document exists to-day in the Cottonian MSS. with the title-page as described. The script is for the most part a careless scrawl with a bad pen on roughish paper, with ample crossings out and many interlinings. The spelling improves and the entire style of the writing changes here

¹ Aylmer.

² “ . . . the blots of infamy which had been laid upon her mother, serving as a bar to her preferment amongst foreign Princes.”

and there as though he aspired to better its appearance ; but it almost never reaches the approximate symmetry of his earlier writing as shown in his letters to Catherine Parr and to the King. In all the sixty-eight pages there is hardly a word of himself, his health, or his emotions. Elizabeth could never lay pen to paper without the colour of her personality reflecting on the page ; Edward's untidy leaves are pale and dull like himself. In discussing the authenticity of the Journal, Burnet, who was the first to publish it (with what was to him modernized spelling, etc.), says : " This Year [1550] the King began to write his Journal himself. The first three Years of his Reign are set down in a short way of recapitulating Matters. But this Year he set down what was done every Day, that was of any moment, together with the Foreign News that were sent over. And oftentimes he called to mind Passages days after they were done ; and sometime after the Middle of a Month he tells what was done in the beginning of it. Which shews clearly that it was his own Work ; for if it had been drawn for him by any that were about him, and given him only to copy out for his Memory, it would have been more exact ; so that there remains no doubt with me but that it was his own originally." Hayward adds the information that " his notes hee Cyphered with Greeke characters to the end that they who waited on him should not read them ;" (Foxe and Burnet both mention a locked chest of cyphered notes and private opinions to which Edward carried the key. Nothing of this has survived but the rumour.) See Plates IV and VII.

The leopards and the lilies. The British lion is a comparatively recent beast, heraldically speaking. The old armorial bearings portrayed a lion in profile and a leopard full face—the only difference between them on the heraldic shield. As the English King's beast is always regardant he is technically a leopard, and was long so called. Henry V's herald at Crècy, for instance, was designated as the Leopard Herald, and even Napoleon spoke of the English leopards. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*.)

P. 131. " 1551. This year the xxvth daie of Maie was an earthquake in Surrey, at Godston, Brenchiley, Titsey, Rigate, Bedington, and Croyden, and a sixteene miles in length, about twelve of the clocke in the forenoon, which lasted a quarter of an hower, so that the howses, hills, and all the earth shaked that the people were in great fear of God, but no hurt donne, praysed be God theirfore.

" This yeare in the month of June was great tempest of weather and signes in the element sene in mony places in England, and in Kent was haile stones of sixe, seaven, or nyne inches, and divers when they melted in one's hand were fashioned like a rose.

" Also this month the sweating sickness beganne to raigne in England, in Salop¹ first, and so came from shire to shire, whereof died verie many of yong men and weomen, and it beganne in London, about the seventh daie of Julie, and contynued till the last daie therof, wherof died many in the said cittie, both of rich yong men and other." *Wriothesley Chronicle*.

" A earthquake was at Croiden and blechinglee, and in the most part of Surrey, but no harme was donne." *Edward's Journal*.

Fall of Somerset. With a few exceptions historical opinion seems very lenient to the Protector. The Haynes State Papers were not published until 1740. " Assuredly hee was a man harmless and faithfull, and one who never hatched any hopes prejudicial to the King, but always intended his safety and honour ; but hard it is for greatness to stand, when it is not sustained by the proper strength." Hayward. Strype admits unwillingly that Somerset was " somewhat elated in his prosperity, and affected to be arbitrary in the Court, and to have his own will take Place, and would seldom follow advice. . . . A Knight once having some Business with him, was so nipped by him and rebuked, and that for no great Matter, that he could not forbear repairing to Paget's chamber, there complaining to him with tears, how he had been used a little before by the Protector." " And seeing the Protector was free-spirited, open-hearted, humble, hard to distrust, easie to forgive ; The other² proud, subtle, close, cruell, and revengeful ; it was impar congressus betwixt them, almost with as much disadvantage as betwixt a naked man and an armed person." Fuller. " He is not accused of Rapine, Cruelty, or Bribery, but only of such things as are incident to all Men that are of a sudden exalted to a high and

¹ Shropshire.

² The Earl of Warwick.

disproportionate Greatness." *Burnet*. *Of the trial, Hayward adds that when accused Somerset "neither held silence as hee might, nor constantly denied it, but entangled himself in his doubtful tale."* *And of the charges, Heylin says : "How much of this is true, or not, it is not easie to determine, though possibly enough it is, that all this Smoak could not be without some fire ; which whosoever kindled first, there is no doubt, but that the Earl Dudley blew the Coals, and made it seem greater than it was."* (*Probably if Warwick had not been so heartily hated for his own sake, Somerset would have been more heartily condemned by their contemporaries.*) "There is no evidence to show that Warwick had any other objection to Somerset than as an obstacle to his ambition, and it was due to the strength of his personal following that Somerset was brought to the block, while the less formidable obstacles to Warwick's aims escaped with imprisonment, fines, and degradation." *Pollard*.

The dukedom of Northumberland. This title had been extinct since the attainder of the Percys in 1537, for participating in a papal rebellion under Henry VIII. The last earldom (the 6th) had been held by Henry, boy suitor to Anne Boleyn before her marriage to the King. He died childless, and was predeceased by his collateral heirs. After the execution of Northumberland Mary restored the title in 1557 to the original line in the person of Thomas, nephew to Henry, the 6th earl.

The dukedom of Suffolk. The dead boys were the children of Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, by his fourth wife, Catherine Willoughby, and were his only legitimate male heirs. Brandon had died in 1545.

P. 132. *Elizabeth's reply to Somerset's appeal is given by Leti only, and is as follows :* "My lord Duke : God knows how gravely your misfortune has affected me : and I am sure you will do me the justice to believe me. Your Imprisonment cannot fail to imprison my soul in grief at seeing myself deprived of a support which championed my interests at Court with so much benefit and glory to me. But enough of my own private loss, if only there were left to me the consolation of proving to you a gratitude equal to my zeal in defending and forwarding your interests. You know what the undertakings of Parliament are, and how much can be done by a weak woman in circumstances of this sort. I have not failed to talk of it to my brother the King, whom I find quite afflicted and who would be well disposed toward you if the decisions rested with him only. According to appearances and to rumours, your misfortunes will go further than mere imprisonment, since you have many jealous enemies, and very few friends and partisans. The constancy of your heart and the firmness of your spirit will be more capable than I am of consoling you ; nor can I suggest in such a dilemma greater consolation than to pray God to vouchsafe his defence, and aid you in such unfortunate circumstances with his divine protection. My lady the Duchess has come to see me twice, and I have expressed to her my sentiments much better by word of mouth, being unable with my pen to do more than declare myself always the same, ELIZABETH. 14 January, 1550." (*Trans. E. T.*) *The Duchess of Somerset was likewise imprisoned in the Tower within a few days of the Duke's arrest, and remained there until Mary's accession in 1553. Elizabeth's assertion that she had spoken to the King in Somerset's behalf can hardly be the truth, as there is no record of her having come anywhere near the Court during this period. She may have written him.*

This was the same Marie for whom Henry had negotiated unsuccessfully just before his marriage to Anne of Cleves and that of Marie to James V.

P. 133. *Edward and the Protector.* The original of the entry reads : "22. The duke [of Somerset]¹ had his hedes cut off upon towre hill betwene eight and nine a cloke in the morning." It is the only entry for the day. *Burnet explains Edward's lack of interest in the Duke's fate :* "All this was told the King with such Circumstances, that he was induced to believe it ; and the probity of his disposition wrought in him a great aversion to his Uncle ; when he looked on him as a Conspirator against the Lives of the other Counsellors ; and so he resolved to leave him to the Law." *Edward had very little choice. He had undoubtedly liked his jolly uncle Thomas the better of the two ; and he must have been heartily sick of the severities of his uncle Edward. Even his cold nature must have recoil'd at the charge of still another murder planned by Somerset—the alleged plot against Northumberland's life was doubtless made the most of to Edward, though Northumberland later practically confessed that*

¹ Inserted above.

it was a fabrication. Hayward describes touching scenes of remorse on Edward's part, but Hayward was a romanticist. The child had been brought up in such a way that spontaneous emotions were unnatural to him, and unlike his sisters he was born putty to any moulding hand. See Plate VII.

This Mary Tudor is the heroine of Charles Major's charming if unhistorical romance "When Knighthood was in Flower." She was in love with Brandon before she went to France as Louis' bride, though Brandon's affairs of the heart were as numerous as the King's own. Henry's will conferred the succession on Mary's descendants, failing lawful issue of his own three children, which at one time seemed highly improbable. He passed over his elder sister Margaret's rights, embodied in her granddaughter little Mary Stuart, largely because of their close association by marriage with his old enemy France; and Mary had always been his favourite sister. By the terms of his will, the only way Mary Stuart could reach the English throne was by breaking her betrothal with the Dauphin and marrying Edward; Henry died in the firm conviction that she had only herself to blame if she never wore the crown matrimonial of England. "The next in the Will, were the Heirs of the French Queen¹ by Charles Brandon, who were the Duchess of Suffolk and her sister;² though I have seen it often said in many Letters and Writings of that Time, that all that Issue by Charles Brandon was illegitimated: since he was certainly married to one Mortimer, before he married the Queen of France; which Mortimer lived long after his marriage to that Queen; so that all her children were Bastards: some say he was divorced from his Marriage to Mortimer, but that is not clear to me." Burnet. *Being without hope of future sons, Frances Grey, Duchess of Suffolk, passed the dangerous honour on to her eldest daughter Jane, instead of claiming the inheritance for herself as she was entitled to do. Fuller's transcription of Henry's will follows:*

" . . . And We Will that if Our said Daughter Mary do marry without the assent and consent of the Privy Councillours, and others appointed by Us to be of the Council to Our said Son Prince Edward, or the most part of them that shall be alive, thereunto, before the said Marriage, had in writing, sealed with their Seals, as aforesaid; That then, and from thence forth, for lack of Heirs of the Several Bodies of Us, and of Our said Son Prince Edward, lawfully begotten, the said Imperial Crown shall wholly remain, be, and come, to Our said Daughter Elizabeth, and to the Heirs of Her Body, lawfully begotten, in such manner and form, as though Our said Daughter Mary were then dead, without any Issue of the Body of Our said Daughter Mary lawfully begotten; Anything contained in this Our Will, or any Act of Parliament, or Statute, to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding. And in case Our said Daughter, the Lady Mary, do not keep and perform the said condition, expressed, declared, and limited to her Estate in the said Imperial Crown, and other the Premises, in this Our last Will declared; And that Our said Daughter Elizabeth do not keep, and perform, for her part, the said condition declared and limited by this Our last Will to the Estate of the said Lady Elizabeth in the Imperial Crown, in this Realm of England and Ireland, and other the Premises; We Will, that then, and from thenceforth, after Our Decease, and for lack of the Heirs of the several Bodies of Us, and of Our said Son Prince Edward, and of Our Daughter Mary, lawfully begotten, the said Imperial Crown and other the Premises, shall wholly remain, and come, to the next Heirs lawfully begotten of the said Lady Frances, in such manner, and form, as though the said Lady Elizabeth were dead without any Heir of her body lawfully begotten; Anything contained in this Will or in any Act, or Statute, to the Contrary notwithstanding."

Also see note to page 148.

P. 134. *Jane's character.* ". . . a woman of most rare and incomparable perfections; for besides her excellent beauty adorned with all variety of vertues, as a cleare sky with stars, as a Princely Diadem with jewels, shee was most dear to the King in regard both of her Religion, and of her education in the knowledge of the liberal Sciences, and skill in Languages; for in Theology, in Philosophy, in all liberal Arts, in the Latine and Greeke tongues, and in the vulgar Languages of divers neere Nations she farre exceeded all of her sexe, and any of her yeeres, unlesse haply the King himselfe." Hayward. Ascham in his "Scholemaster"

¹ Mary Tudor, as Louis' widow, was so designated.
² Lady Eleanor Clifford Countess of Cumberland,

records the following speech made to him by *Lady Jane* during a visit he paid to her Leicestershire home a year or so before her marriage : " One of the greatest benefites that ever God gave me, is, that he sent me so sharpe and severe parentes, and so jentle a scholemaster. For when I am in presence eyther of father or mother ; whether I speake, kepe silence, sit, stand, or go, eate, drinke, be merie, or sad, be sowyng, playing, dauncing, or doing anie thing else, I must do it, as it were, in such weight, measure, and number, even so perfidie as God made the world, or else I am so sharplie taunted, so cruellic threatened, yea presentlie, sometimes, with pinches, nippes, and bobbes, and other waies which I will not name for the honor I bear them, so without measure disordered, that I thineke myselfe in hell, till time come that I must go to Mr. Elmer ; who teacheth me so jentlie, so pleasantlie, with such fair allurements to learninge, that I thinck all the time nothing whiles I am with him. And when I am called from him I fall on weeping, because whatever I do els, but learninge, is full of grief, trouble, feare, and whole misliking unto me."

P. 135. *Davcy cites Baardo as the source of the scene of Jane's rebellion against the betrothal to Guildford Dudley.*

P. 136. *Edward's illness.* " 2 April. I fell sike of the mesels and the small pokkes." *Edward's Journal*, 1552. " He had had last Year, first the Measels, and then the Small-Pox, of which he was perfectly recovered ; In his Progress, he had been sometimes violent in his exercises, which had cast him into great Colds ; But these went off, and he seemed to be well after it. But in the beginning of January this Ycar, he was scized with a deep Cough ; and all Medicines that were used did rather encrease than lesson it ; upon which a suspicion was taken up, and spread over all the World, (so that it is mentioned by most of the Historians of that Age) that some lingering Poison had been given him : But more than Rumour and some ill-favoured Circumstances, I could never discover concerning this." *Burnet.*

P. 137. *Lord Chief Justice. Sir Edward Montague.*

Edward's provision for the succession. ". . . In case the Lady Mary or the Lady Elizabeth should enjoy the crowne, they would assuredly joyn in mariage with some stranor, who should reduce this noble and free Realme into the servitude of the Bishop of Rome, and thereby bring in foraigne customes and laws, abolishing those whereupon the rights of all native subjects depend, and haply the whole body of the Realme should hereby be annexed as a member to some other greater Kingdome, to the utor subversion of the anciente dignity and estate thereof ;" *Hayward.*

The letters patent were signed about a fortnight before the death of the King. " During which Interval he [Northumberland] had another Game to Play ; which was the getting into his Power the Princess Mary ; whom of all others, he most feared as the most likely Person to destroy his whole contrivance. For well he knew that, if she stood upon her Right, as no doubt she would, she was not only sure of a strong party within the Realm, who still remained in good Affections to the Church of Rome ; but, that Her party here would be backed, and countenanced by Her Alliances abroad, who could not but prefer, and support her Interest against all pretenders. He therefore must make sure of Her, or else account all void, and frustrate, which was done already." *Heylin.*

P. 143. *Jane's removal to the Tower.* " It is an Antient Custom of the Kings of England, immediately on the Death of their Predecessors, to provide their lodgings in the Tower. Taking possession, as it were, by that Royal Fortress, of the rest of the Kingdom ; and from thence passing in a solenn, and Magnificent manner, through the principle streets of London, to their Coronation." *Heylin.*

Arundel's message. " Arundel is said to have sent his message to the Princess Mary from Greenwich the very night the King died, while the Lords were actually debating the event, tho to keep it secret, Northumberland had had the precaution to double the guards, on purpose the better to prevent all communication between the King's apartment and the others." *Nares.* *This could hardly be so, as Mary did not receive the warning until the following afternoon and Hunsdon lies only about thirty miles from Greenwich. She is known to have missed Dudley's troop by only a matter of miles and minutes. The various conflicting stories of Mary's actual escape*

from Northumberland's plot cannot be sifted to any certain truth, and most of them take no account whatever of the plain necessities of time and space. Miss Strickland is obviously influenced by her predilection for the Throckmorton family, to which I believe she was related. Lingard is equally certain of Arundel, and the balance of historical opinion is in his favour. The real, unquestionable source of the warnings which reached Mary and Elizabeth is one of those things we shall probably never know. But Arundel's ensuing position of trust at Court—as against Throckmorton's connection with the Wyatt Rebellion—and the otherwise inexplicable evidences of Elizabeth's gratitude which elevated Dudley at her accession, form the solidest basis for this conjecture. We know too that Cecil was betraying Northumberland in all directions at this time.

P. 148. Arundel's grudge against the Greys. In Henry Grey's haste to take advantage of an opportunity to marry into the royal line he had set aside without even the usual formalities his first wife, Lady Catherine Fitzalan, sister of the Earl of Arundel, and married Frances Brandon, c. 1533. Lady Catherine never disputed her rights, but her family cherished a long enmity against the man who had abandoned her.

The friendship between Mary and Jane is evident in Mary's Privy Purse which records small gifts, and the story of a rich gown bestowed by Mary on Jane during the visits exchanged during the summer of 1551. Jane is said to have tactlessly aped Elizabeth's spectacular simplicity at this period.

P. 149. Mary left Sawston before sunrise the next day on a report that the Cambridge Protestants were marching against her. Fuller mentions Huddleston of Sawston thus, in the Worthies : "He was highly honoured afterwards by Queen Mary, and deservedly. Such the trust she reposed in him, that (when Jane Grey was proclaimed queen) she came to him privately to Salston, (sic) and rid thence behind his servant (the better to disguise herself from discovery) to Framlingham Castle. She afterwards made him (as I have heard) her Privy-councillor, and (besides other great boons) bestowed the bigger part of Cambridge castle (then much ruined) upon him, with the stones whereof he built his fair house in this county." As they rode away that morning they looked back from the first rise of ground to see Sawston Hall, which had sheltered her, in flames—she owed him a house. If the Cambridge men had not stopped to plunder, they might well have caught up with her.

P. 150. Sion. The house belonged to Somerset's widow, who was still in the Tower. Northumberland had seized it, along with the rest of the Duke's confiscated property. Jane's proclamation. Howard.

P. 151. Mary's proclamation in the North. Lingard.

Jane's reluctance for the crown. ". . . of enforc'd honors so unambitious that shee never attired herselfe in Regall Ornaments but constrainedly and with tears." Heywood. ". . . yielding her Head with more unwillingness to the Ravishing Glories of a Crown, than afterwards she did to the stroak of the Ax." Heylin.

P. 152. Mary's supporters. "She had in various places above 35,000 or 40,000 men, foot and horse, armed at her devotion, without having cost her a crown; not only presenting their persons, but also bringing her the little money, plate, and jewels they had; nor could she make them receive pay nor any other benefit." Turner. "At this place first resorted to her the men of Suffolk, who being among the number of the most zealous reformers, promised her their support, but with this stipulation, that Mary should not attempt to alter that religion which, by laws and orders publicly enacted, was established in her brother King Edward's days and which had been generally recognized by the consent of the whole realm. With this condition she readily complied, and knowing that faith is not to be kept with heretics, she scrupled not to promise them faithfully, upon the word of a queen, that no innovation should be made in religion; which promise had she as religiously kept, as they did willingly engage to protect and preserve her, at the expence of their lives, she had acted worthy of her high descent, and had made her reign more stable thro' future tranquillity; for let a king or queen, or any

private person, be ever so powerful, yet breach of promise is an ill supporter of peace and quietness, fear worse, cruelty worst of all." *Foxe.*

"But 'tis the Manner of the English, to have such a constant Veneration for the lawful Sovereign that no Pretences of Colours, not even of Religion it selfe, can draw 'em from their Loyalty. Of which Truth, the unhappy Fall of Lady Jane which we shall presently relate, was a memorable Example." *Godwin.*

P. 153. Northumberland's plight at Cambridge. "His army like a sheep left part of his fleece on every bush as it came by, at every stage and corner some conveying themselves from him, till his Souldiers were wash'd away before any storm of warre fell upon them. Only some few, who were chained to the Duke by their particular engagements, and some great Persons hopeless to conceal themselves, as being too bigge for a cover, stuck fast unto him." *Fuller.* ". . . as being not only deserted by a great part of his Company, but in a manner by himself." *Heylin.*

P. 154. Departure of Council. "The xix of July, the Counsell, partieye moved with the right of the Lady Maries Causo, partly considering, that the most of the realm was wholly bent on hir side, changed their minds and assomblid themselves at Bainard's Castel, where they communed with the Earle of Pembroke: and immediately with the Mayor of London, certaine Aldermen, the Sheriffs, Garter King at Arms, and a Trumpot, came unto Cheape, where they proclaymed the Ladye Mary, daughter to King Henry the cygnt, and Qucene Katherina Queeno of England, Fraunce, and Irelande, Defender of the Faith, etc., and the same night the Earle of Arundel and the Lord Paget rode in poste to Queen Mary." *Stow.* "In this Assembly the Earl of Arundel fell foul upon Northumberland with the utmost Severity. He ran over the History of the late Times, and reconing up every Act of Mismanagement, Cruelty, and Injustice, committed in King Edward VI's Reign, threw the Odium of all upon him only; then he made ex-postulating Complaints that the Children of King Henry VIII shou'd, contrary to all Right, be thrust from the Succession; and profess'd himself amaz'd to think how Northumberland had brought such Great and Noble Persons (meaning those present) to so mean Servitude, as to be made the Tools of his wicked Designs: For 'twas by their consent and Assistance that the Crown was put upon the Daughter of Suffolk, the same Northumberland's Daughter-in-law; the Sovereignty in effect remaining in him, of exercising the most uncontroulable Rage and Tyranny over their Lives and Fortunes. To accomplish this Usurpation indeed, the Cause of Religion was pretended; but tho' they had not forgot the Apostle's Advice, not to do Evil that Good may follow; and to obey even the bad Princes, not out of Fear, but for Conscience sake; yet who, he asked, had seen Cause to think, that in matters of Religion Queen Mary intended any alterations? For when she was lately addressed about this in Suffolk, she had (which was true) given a very satisfactory answer. And what a Madness is it, says he, for Men to throw themselves into Certain Destruction, to avoid an uncertain Danger. I heartily wish there had been no such transgression; but since there has, the best Remedy for a past Error is a timely Repentance; wherefore 'tis my Advice, that we all join our utmost Endeavours, that so by our Authority, Mary, the rightful and undoubted Heiress of these Kingdoms, may be proclaim'd Queen.

"After he had ended his Speech, the Earl of Pembroke generously profess'd aloud his Approbation of Arundel's Proposal; and clapping his Hand to his Sword, added, That he was ready to dispute that Matter at the Peril of his Life with any who durst oppose it." *Strype.*

Mary's proclamation. "Great was the triumph hear at London; for my tyme I never sawe the lyke, and by the reporte of others the like was never seene. The nomber of cappes that weare throwne up at the proclamation were not to be tould. The earle of Pembroke threwe awaie his cap¹ full of angell²nes.³ I sawe myselfe money was throwne out at windowes for joy. The bonefires weare without number, and what with showtyng⁴ and crienge of the people, and ringinge of the

¹ cap.

² aiguillettes—small jewelled tags worn as ornaments; or else, angels, (i.e. angels), gold coins worth about 7s. 6d.

³ shouting.

belles, there could no one heare almost what another sayd, besides banketyngs¹ and synging in the streeete for joye." *Wriothesley Chronicle.*

Jane's attitude toward her own fall. "She had before received the offer of the Crown, with as eaven a Temper, as if it had been nothing, but a Garland of Flowers; and now She lays aside the thought thereof with as much contentedness, as She could have thrown away that Garland, when the scent was gone." *Heylin.*

P. 155. Elizabeth's reply to the commissioners. ". . . messengers from Dudley, the Duke of Northumberland . . . moved her to resigne her title to the Crowne for a summc of money and certaine lands assigned her. She modestly answered, that her elder sister the Lady Mary was first to be agreed with all; for as long as the said Lady Mary lived, she for her part could challenge no right at all." *Camden.*

Northumberland's arrest. Arundel arrived at the Duke's door before breakfast on the 21st of July, and announced that Northumberland was under arrest. In response to the Duke's abject plea for mercy Arundel answered shortly that he should have sought mercy sooner. Later in the day the Duke was removed toward London under a guard of 800 men; he was terrified and ill, and suffered from gout. Towards evening a cold rain came on, and he was forced to spend the night sheltering in a barn. Gaunt, shivering and wretched, wrapped in a ragged red cloak, he entered London a captive early the next morning, as the shop-keepers were taking down their shutters. Hostile crowds soon gathered to see him pass, there were shouts of "Death to the Traitor!" and mud was thrown on the red cloak. For a while he rode bareheaded and bowing, hoping for compassion, but finally he hid his face from the execrations of the mob. His health broke down completely after he reached the Tower.

Robert Dudley tried to reach Mary's presence to beg for pardon, but was arrested and sent to London. ". . . having made their applications to the Queen at Framlingham found there no better entertainment than if they had been taken in some act of hostility." *Heylin.*

P. 156. Mary's entry into London. "And all the streets by the way as her highness rode standing so full of people shoutinge and crying Jesus save her Grace, with weepinges teares for joy, that the lyke was never seene before." *Wriothesley Chronicle.*

P. 157. Lord William Howard. *The son of the 2nd Duke of Norfolk by his 2nd wife, Agnes Tilney; and therefore a half brother only to the mother of Anne Boleyn and to the father of Catherine Howard, both born of the Duke's first wife, Elizabeth Tilney.*

P. 158. Courtenay's grandfather, the Earl of Devon, and Elizabeth's grandfather, Henry VII, married sisters, Catherine and Elizabeth, daughters of Edward IV.

Mary's finances. A levy of heavy fines on those concerned in the recent rebellion was employed to the benefit of the treasury and the currency. Gardiner soon showed himself a financial genius.

Northumberland's execution. "The Duke of Northumberland shewed that Abjectness of Mind that might have been expected from so insolent a Man, loaded with so much Guilt: He begg'd his Life with all possible Meannes, That he might do Penance all the Days of his Life, if it were in a Mousehole." Burnet. *The Duke's eloquent plea for Arundel's intercession with the Queen, written the night before his execution, exists in the Harleian MSS.* An excerpt follows: "Alas, my good lord, is my crime so heinous as no redemption but my blood can wash away the spots thereof? An old proverb there is, and that most true, that a living dog is better than a dead lion. Oh, that it would please her good grace to give me life, yea, the life of a dog, if I might but live and kiss her feet and spend both life and all in her honourable services, as I have the best part already, under her worthy brother, and most glorious father. Oh, that her mercy were such, as she would consider how little profit my dead and dismembered body can bring her; but how great and glorious an honour it will be in all posterity when the report shall be that so gracious and mighty a queen had granted life to so miserable and penitent an object. Your honourable usage and promise to me since these my troubles have

¹ banqueting.

made me bold to challenge this kindness at your hands. Pardon me if I have done amiss therein, and spare not, I pray, your bended knees for me in this distress. The God of Heaven, it may be, will requite it one day on you or yours; and, if my life be lengthened by your mediation, and my good lord chancellor's (to whom I have also sent my blurred letters) I will ever owe it to you to be spent at your honourable feet. Oh, my good lord, remember how sweet life is, and how bitter the contrary. Spare not your speech and pains; for God, I hope, hath not shut out all hopes of comfort from me in that gracious, princely, and womanly heart...." *Of course, Arundel did nothing on Northumberland's behalf, and Heywood concludes the story thus:* "Now those two great opposing Dukes, Somerset and Northumberland, whose unlimited Ambitions England and the government thereof could not satiate, one peece of ground containes them: They lye quietly together in one small bed of earth before the Altar in St. Peter's Church, in the Tower, betwixt two Queenes, wives of King Henry the Eighth. Queen Anne and Queen Catherine, all four beheaded. All their greatnessse and magnificence is covered over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet.*" *Northumberland's Duchess survived only a few months.* "... though he had six sons, all of them living to be men, and all of them to be married men, yet they all went childless to the grave, I mean as to the having of lawful issue . . ." *Heylin.*

Cranmer. He was sent to the Tower soon afterwards; his trial was for heresy, not treason, and a dreary business of recantations and imprisonment went on for two years, during which time he might well have escaped if he had chosen.

P. 159. *Mary's lenience to Jane.* One of the mysteries of Jane's tragedy is the apparent indifference of her parents to her fate, and Mary's tacit acceptance of their attitude. Jane wrote from prison a long, frank account of the whole affair from her own point of view and the letter is printed in full by Pollino. Its artless truthfulness must have proved to Mary beyond a doubt that there was no guilt attachable to Jane.

Renard on Elizabeth. Granville State Papers.

P. 160. *The Emperor's letters to Mary.* "Upon this the Emperor writ to the Queen several Letters with his own Hand, which is so hardly legible, that it was not possible for me, or some others to whom I showed them, to read them, so well as to copy them out." *Burnet.*

Mary and Courtenay. "... she not onely advanced him to the Erledome of Devonshire, but also to so much of his father's possession as there remained in her handes, whereby it was then thought of many, that she bare affection to him by way of marriage, but it came not to passe (for what cause I cannot geve any reason) but surelye the subjects of England were most desirous thereof." *Grafton Chronicle.* "The new Earle of Devon was much in the Queen's Favour, so that it was thought she had some Inclinations to marry him, but he, either not presuming so high, or really having an aversion to her, and an inclination to her Sister, who of that moderate sharo of Beauty that was between them had much the better of her, and was Nineteen years younger, made his Addresses with more than ordinary concern to the Lady Elizabeth, and this did bring them both in Trouble, as shall be afterwards shown." *Burnet.* (*The difference in their ages was seventeen, not nineteen, years.*)

P. 162. *Reginald Pole.* As Courtenay was descended from Edward IV, the grandson of his daughter Catherine, younger sister of Elizabeth of York; so Reginald Pole was the grandson of Edward's younger brother George, the murdered Duke of Clarence.

P. 163. *Philip's son.* In 1543 Philip had married his second cousin Mary, daughter of John III of Portugal. She lived only two years, and left one child, the notoriously unfortunate Don Carlos who died more or less insane at the age of twenty-three. So complicated were the relationships and nomenclature of the European royal families that the negotiations for a second wife, which were under way at this time, concerned another Mary of Portugal, his first cousin, sister to John III, and aunt to the former wife. Her dowry was enormous.

For years Doña Isabella de Osorio had been his acknowledged mistress, and Granville mentions offspring in the plural.

P. 166. The coronation. Davey.

The Chair of St. Edward. “ . . . was made for Edward I to enclose the famous stone of Scone which he seized in 1297, and brought from Scotland to the Abbey, where he placed it under the Abbot's care. The Scots made repeated and vain efforts to induce Edward to give it back. . . . Setting aside the earlier myths, it is certain that it had been for centuries an object of veneration to the Scots, who fancied that ‘ while it remained in the country the State would be unshaken.’ Upon this stone their Kings, down to John Balliol, were crowned, and . . . upon this chair and stone, which are moved into the Sanctuary at coronations, the Sovereigns of England have ever since been crowned.” *Westminster Official Guide.*

P. 168. Philip's picture. “ I heard, not many Years ago, of a certain Lady, who having the Picture sent unto her of Some one she never saw, who whould be her Husband, was so enamoured thereon, and so ravished, that she languished for Love, and was in manner out of her Wits for his long Tarrying and Absence. But I wcen, hot Love was soon cold, and not long after repented.” *Thomas Smith with reference to Mary, when Elizabeth's marriage with a foreigner was being discussed, as quoted in Strype.*

Philip's aunt was Mary, Queen of Hungary, Regent of the Netherlands.

Anti-Spanish demonstrations. “ The English, more clamorous in proclaiming their grievances and furious in shewing their resentment, than either cool in considering or wise in taking, proper methods for their relief, vented their fury in loud and useless exclamations against the Spaniards: but they were a rope of sand; and though thrc were no want of hands for any enterprize, they had not an head, capable of forming a great design, and qualified to unite them in its execution.” *Carte.*

P. 169. Elizabeth's peril. “ . . . in a time of such inevitable danger, when all Her friends were hold the Queen her Sister's enemies; and her enemies, the Queen's friends; when nothing but Examinations, sentences of Imprisonment, and terrors of Death were thundred against her.” *Heywood.* “ Till this time, none more dear to her than her Sister Elizabeth, whom she always took with her by the hand, wheresoever she went, and seldom dined or supped without her. But this solemnity [the Coronation] being passed over (as if she were now freed from all the fears of a competition) she estranged herself from her in such a manner, as shewed that she had formerly desired her company for some by-respects, and not out of natural affection.” *Heylin.*

“ The Princess is so much in disfavour that there is not one Lady in this Court who dares to visit her in her chamber, or even to speak with her without the permission of the Queen. Nevertheless the Princess is so little dismayed by this, that every day she has had all the young gentlemen of the Court to visit her, and takes pains to talk with them, expecting (so I understand) to gain her end in a few days, which is, in short, that she may obtain her dismissal and go to her own house where she lived formerly. But I doubt that such permission will be given her, unless with some condition, such as that there shall be men in her suite, who will watch her closely, and possibly a large guard for the same object.” *Noailles.*

P. 170. As Elizabeth rode out of London into voluntary exile, she was touched and dismayed to find herself surrounded by a voluntary guard of honour amounting to nearly five hundred of the rash young element in the Court—who saw her well along the road to Ashridge with good wishes and expressions of loyalty. This hardly added to her popularity with Mary.**P. 171. The scene with Howard and the ambassadors was reported to the Emperor by Renard and Egmont.****P. 172. Thomas Wyatt.** “ The most active person in it was Sir Thomas Wyatt, a Kentish gentleman, much esteemed and beloved: he had been frequently employed in embassies, particularly in Spaine; and having there observed the subtlety and cruelty of the Spaniards, he had contracted an utter aversion to their manner of government.”

P. 173. *Wyatt's advance on London.* Southwark is a suburb of London lying on the south side of the Thames just west of London Bridge. "3 Feb. After the knowledge thereof once had in London, forthwith the draybridge was cutt downe and the bridge gates shut. The mayre and the sheryves harnessyd theym selves, and commanded eche man to shutt in their shoppes and wyndowes, and being redy in harness to stande every one at his dore, what chance soever myght hapen. Then should ye have seen taking in of wares of the stalles in most hasty maunor; aged men were astonyed,¹ many women wept for feare; moche noysse and tumult was everywhere; so terryble and fearfull at the fyrest was Wyat and his armys comyng to the most part of the cytezens, who wer seldom or nere² wont before to here or have eny suchie invasions to their cyty." *Chronicle of Queen Jane and Queen Mary.*

Mary at the Guildhall. "Meantime Queen Mary came to Guild Hall and there made a long oration, and indeed if on just occasion she could not speak confidently and pertinently, she was neither Daughter to her Father, nor to her Mother." *Fuller.*

There are several versions of Mary's speech, differing only slightly from each other. I have drawn mainly upon Holinshed.

P. 176. *Mary's forces were extended over what is now St. James's Street and Jermyn Street, an area then known as St. James's Filds.* Country lanes and the park walls covered the present Pall Mall and Piccadilly.

P. 177. *Holinshed says that when they came to tell Mary her cause was lost at Charing Cross she "sayde it was theyre fonde opinion that durst not come neare to see the tryall, saying further that shee hirselfe woulde enter the fields to trye the truth of hir quarrell, and to dye wyth them that would serve hir, rather than to yelde one iotte unto suche a Traytour as Wyat was, and prepared hirself accordingly."*

P. 178. *Suffolk's capture and death.* He was betrayed by a servant, Underwood, whom he trusted to hide him, and who "engaged himselfe with millions of oathes for the performance of his truth and fidelity, yet easily corrupted with some small quantity of gold, and many large promises, judas-like betrayed his Master, discovered him, and delivered him up to the Earl of Huntington, under whose conduct hee was with a strong guard conveyed thru' London to the Tower. . ." *Heywood.*

P. 179. *Jane's execution.* ". . . and had not her father after first offense remitted, ran headlong into a second, it is generally concived shee [Mary] would have pardoned her life: his misconceived rashness hasten'd the deaths of these two Innocents, Guildford and Jane." *Heywood.* "Judge Morgan, who gave the sentence of her death presently fell mad, and in all his distracted fits cryed out continually, take away the Lady Jane, take away the Lady Jane from me, and in that extreame distemperature of passion ended his life." *Heywood.* There are few details of her last hours, though the story goes that she watched Guildford led out to execution, and by a mischance met the cart returning with his body on her own way to the scaffold. She died on a grey, misty morning, threatening rain. She wore the same black dress and white wimpole that she had worn during her trial, and had the composure to make the usual speech of humility and resignation on the scaffold. Apparently her corpse lay neglected for several hours, and was finally buried by her women in a common deal coffin, without a religious ceremony.

P. 180. *Accounts of the scene at Ashridge are graphic and varying. The truth doubtless lies somewhere between Foxe and Tytler.*

P. 184. *Elizabeth's entry into London.* "The Lady Elizabeth arrived yesterday, dressed all in white, with a great following of the attendants of the said Lady³ and her own, and caused her litter to be uncovered, so as to show herself to the people; her face being pale, proud, haughty and disdainful, to disguise her mortification. The said Lady would not see her, and has lodged her in a quarter of her house from which neither she nor her attendants can go out, except by passing the guards, and has left her only two gentlemen, six women, and four servants—and the rest

¹ astonished.

² never.

³ the Queen,

of her train is lodged in the City of London. They advise her to have her placed in the Tower, since she is accused by Wyatt, named in the letters of the ambassador of France, suspected by her own counsellors, and since it is certain that the enterprise was in her favour. And surely, Sire, if while the occasion offers, she does not punish her and Courtenay, she [the Queen] will never be secure ;” *Trans. from Tytler's transcription of the original in Brussels—Renard to the Emperor.*

P. 189. Philip's lack of interest. “The preparations for the reception of his Highness continue ; and her Majesty has been advised not to leave this place till some news of the Prince arrive. Some of the Council express their astonishment that he has never written to the Queen, or sent any person to pay her a visit, seeing the marriage is so far advanced ; which I excused as well as I can.” *Renard to the Emperor, April 28.*

P. 190. Elizabeth's letter. Record Office. *The reference in the opening sentence is supposedly to the words of John of France, who was taken prisoner by the Black Prince in 1356 and brought to England for ransom. When this had been partially arranged, he was allowed to return to France, after about four years' captivity, leaving his son Louis as hostage. Louis escaped and broke his bond, whereupon John, without hope of ever paying the full ransom, returned voluntarily to his English captivity, remarking that “if good faith were banished from the rest of the world, it ought always to be found in the hearts of kings.” (Bonnechose.) Without detracting too much from John's chivalry, it might be added that he must have thoroughly enjoyed himself in England, as he was lodged with royal state, entertained with tournaments and festivities, and supplied with French luxuries by Edward III, who was King of England at that time. John died in England in 1364, and his body was returned to France with royal ceremony.*

Elizabeth to the Tower. “It was only because no one could be found upon whom to impose the task of guarding the Lady Elizabeth, that they resolved she should be sent to the Tower on Saturday last, by the Thames, and not through the streets. This, however, did not take place on that day ; and the reason was that, at the house when the tide served, she besought an interview with the Queen, affirming that this [her being sent to the Tower] was not done with her [Mary's] knowledge, but solely by the anger of the Chancellor. If she was denied to see the Queen, she wished to be permitted to write to her : this was allowed ; and when she was writing, the hour of the tide, which alone would have served for her passage below the bridge, elapsed, and they were obliged to wait till yesterday.” *Renard to the Emperor. (Tytler.)*

P. 198. Elizabeth's arrival at the Tower is described by Foxe and Holinshed. Strype writes that when Anne Boleyn stepped ashore at the Traitor's Gate eighteen years before, “she said to him, Mr. Kyngston, shall I go into a Dungeon ? He answered her, No, Madam ; you shall go into your Lodging, that you lay in at your Coronation. Upon which she said, It is too good for me. And further said Jesu / have mercy on me ! And then kneeled down, weeping a great pace. And in the same Sorrow, fell into a great Laughing. And so she did several Times afterwards. . . . Then she said, Mr. Kyngston, shall I die without Justice ? To which he replied, The poorest Subject the King had, had Justice. And therewith she laughed.”

NOTES TO PART FOUR

Five days after Elizabeth's arrival at the Tower, she was cross-examined by Gardiner and nine other members of the Council. During this ordeal she defended herself so shrewdly and so valiantly that the Earl of Arundel—forty-three, and with a grown son—lost his heart to her and then and there begged her pardon on his knees, to the scandal of his colleagues. Always one of Mary's staunchest supporters, he became henceforth also an avowed admirer of Elizabeth ; to such an extent as finally to find himself (like Howard) distinctly out of favour with the Queen.

There were further torturings of witnesses to gain evidence against her, and

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Godwin says that "*The Bishop of Winchester [Gardiner] upon any Discourse concerning punishing Heretics, is reported to have said : We may shake off the Leaves, and lop the Branches, but if we do not destroy the Root, the Hope of the Heretics (meaning the Lady Elizabeth) we do nothing.*" There is a persistent story which cannot be positively proved—it seems to appear first in Heywood—that Gardiner even sent a Privy Council warrant for her immediate execution, and that the cautious Lieutenant of the Tower feared to act without the Queen's signature and carried the paper to Mary for verification. She was very angry at this attempt to take matters out of her hands—however, no punishment was visited upon Gardiner or the Council, and the cautious Lieutenant was soon replaced by Sir Henry Bedingfield, a man much in the Queen's confidence.

While in the Tower Elizabeth was compelled to hear Mass, and her movements were much restricted, for a time, to only four small rooms in the Bell Tower; her meals passed through the hands of the common soldiers of the guard, which caused strife in the servants' quarters where her cook refused to surrender his post. Later—probably through the intervention of Howard—she was allowed her own servants within limits, and could walk in a little garden within the walls, but always under strict surveillance to prevent any communication with other prisoners or the outside world. Robert Dudley and Edward Courtenay were both lodged not far from her own rooms, but the possibility of their being able to exchange words or letters is very slight, despite the legend that messages were carried to her in the bouquets brought by the small child of one of the officials of the Tower. Strype adds another tale to this : "Whilst the Lady Elizabeth was in the Tower, the Children brought Flowers unto her : one whereof was a child of Martin, Keeper of the Wardrobe : Another was a Girl called Susanna, not above Three or Four Years old : Another Girl also there was, that delighted to wait upon our Virgin Prisoner with her Flowers, who once innocently brought her some little Keys she had got, and telling her, She had brought her the Keys now, that she might go abroad."

Early in April Paget told Renard "if they could not find proof to bring her [Elizabeth] to death, that he saw no surer expedient to secure her than to send her out of the Kingdom to be married to a stranger ; and, if they could find means to bring about her marriage to the Prince of Piedmont [Savoy] with ease, the Parliament and the Council would consent that the right of succession which was in her, should go to him, in the event of the Queen having no children, for he could see no way by which at present she could be excluded or deprived of the right which she has by this Parliament. And, if this took place, both the nobility and the people, it was said, would agree to the marriage of his Highness [Philip] without difficulty : besides, it would be an alliance which might as much aid the Duke [Savoy] in the recovery of his country as any that could be thought of, because the kingdom would willingly contribute and give him assistance." (Tytler.)

On the 11th of the same month Wyatt made a public recantation of his accusations against Elizabeth, in his speech on the scaffold, and swore that she had had nothing to do with his enterprise—a belated attack of conscience, apparently, as he was about to meet his death. The sentiment of the country was now strongly in her favour, and the people were heartily sickened of the bloodshed which followed the Rebellion. Even in the Council there was nothing but strife, with Howard, Arundel, Sussex, and Pembroke leagued against the Chancellor's party. Tytler reprints Renard's letter to the Emperor on April 22 : "Since my last letters, the party squabbles, jealousies, and ill feeling of the Councillors have so increased and become public, that, at this moment, some from animosity against others will not attend the Council ; what one does, another undoes ; what one counsels, another contradicts ; one advises to save Courtenay, another Elizabeth ; and all at last has got into such confusion that we only wait to see the quarrel end in arms and tumult. Thus is the Queen of England treated by those who ought to be her most intimate and devoted servants. . . . And then as regards Elizabeth herself, the judges can find no matter for her condemnation. Already she has liberty to walk in the garden of the Tower ; and even if they had proof, they would not dare to proceed against her, for the love of the Admiral, her relative, who espouses her quarrel, and has at present all the force of the kingdom in his power ; yet (on the other hand) if they let her go, it seems evident that the heretics will proclaim her queen ; whilst, if they set Courtenay at liberty, his Highness cannot be secure, for he will practise with the French, as he has already begun to do."

Time and popular feeling had saved Elizabeth once more. There was talk of sending her to Pontefract Castle—which had an evil name for the murder of Richard II there in 1400; or to the Court of Philip's aunt Mary, who was Regent of the Netherlands; of a marriage with a brother of the King of Portugal. But toward the middle of May, after two months in the Tower, she was removed under a heavy guard of the Queen's household troops to a lodging in the ruined gate-house of Woodstock in Oxfordshire, with Sir Henry Bedingfield in charge of her establishment. At about the same time Courtenay was taken to Fotheringay.

Her journey from the Tower up the Thames to Richmond where she was to lie the first night was like a royal progress, to Bedingfield's dismay. Word had got round that she was released entirely and was returning to Ashridge or Hatfield, and the people lined the banks to cheer her barge. Renard reports that at the river-side factories of the Hanesatic League—whose sympathies were naturally Protestant—"three rounds of artillery were fired as evidence of their delight, at which the Queen and her Council are much displeased, as they consider this a demonstration." And the demonstration continued through all the villages as they passed, where the church bells were rung, and flowers were thrown into her litter along with cakes and other delicacies until she was really encumbered, and begged them to desist. Bedingfield ordered the bell-ringers of Aston village to the gaol, and other enthusiasts to the stocks—but nothing could check a general rejoicing which embarrassed even Elizabeth herself.

Nouilles's view of the change of residence follows: ". . . was conveyed under guard to a manor called Woodstock, which is near Oxford, where, some say, she will be examined as to her religion by the doctors and theologians of the said Oxford; and others say that she will be confined in this manor at the pleasure of the said Emperor, so that he may marry her to whom he chooses, or dispose of her in any other way he pleases, and I have been assured that my Lord Courtenay would also be removed this night and taken to another part of the country called Fotheringhay, there to await the mercy of the said Emperor." (*Ambassades*: May 24, 1554.)

P. 201. Bedingfield's commission. This document, signed by the Queen and faithfully transcribed by Bedingfield in the Papers, reads, in part: "Item: The sayd sir henrye Bedingfield shall cause my sayd syster to be safiye loked unto the safegarde off his person, havyng neverthelesse regarde to use hyr In such goode & honorable sorte as maye be agreeable to our honor and his estate & degree. Item: He shall at tymes convenient suffer our sayd syster for his recreation to walke abroade and take the ayre In the gardeyns off our sayde house—so as he hymself bo present in his companie. Item: He shall cause goode heede to be gyven to our sayd syster's behavior, for seeing that nether she be suffered to have conference with anye suspected person oute off hys hearyng, nor that she dooe, by eny menes, eyther receyve or sende eny message, letter, or token to or from eny manner off person."

His somewhat laboured reply also appears in the Papers, of which the following is an excerpt: "That as touchyng conference with suspected persons, yff your L[ordships] menc straungers and such as bee notte dayly attending upon his person by your assents and privities, with help above sayd I dare take upon me that to dooe. But yff yow mene generall conference with all persons, as well within his howse as withoute, I shall beseeche yow off pardon, for that I dare not take upon me, nor yet for message, letter, or token which maye be conveyed by enye off the three women off hyr privye Chamber, his tooe gromes off the same, or the yeoman off the robes; all which persons, and non others be with his grace at hyr goyng to hyr lodgyng, and parte of them all nyght and untill suche tyme as his grace cometh to hyr dyneng Chamber; the Gromes alwayes after goeng abrode, within the house havyng full opportunitie to do suche matter as ys afore prohibited; and herunto I beseeche your honors to aske my l[ord] chamberlyn whether yt bee within possibilite for me to doo yt or nooc, whosse order in all thyngs I have and dooe accordyng to my poore wytte and indevor put in use, and upon hys declaration to directe possible order."

To which the Council replied, in part: "For your travell [travail] wherin we gyve yow on the quenes highnesse behalfe, our verye hartye thanks, and where ye desyre to be resolved of certayne doutez which yow gather upon your instructions, ye shall understande that although wee well knowe ye cannot mete such

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inconvenience as maye happen by those that attende upon the ladye Elizabeth in bryngyng unto hir letters, messages, or tokens, yet yff ye shall use your diligence and wysdome ther as ye shall see cause, yt shall be your sufficient discharge ; as for Straungers, ye must forsee that noce persons suspecte have anye conference with hyr at all ; and yet to permitte such straungers whom ye shall thynke honeste and not suspicioous, uppon anye resonable cause to speke with hyr In your heryng onlye."

As to a gift of books sent her, anonymously, the Council wrote : " After our hartye commendacions, we have receyved your letters off the last off Maye, together with the books ye sent unto us by thyss bearer ; and have made the quenes highness privie to your doengs in thyss behalf, who taketh your diligence and circumspection used therin in verye acceptable parte. And albeit wee cannot fynd any matter off suspicion in the sayde books, yet doth the quenes highness and we all thinke yt verye strange that anye person shulde off their own authorite, withoute ordre or commaundement, presume to sende thither eyther books or anye other thing, and therefore doth hir highness thynke goode, seeng that such particular occasions off sendyng in & oute off suche thyngys myght peradventure sarve to clooke [cloak] matters off gretter importance, that ye dooe hensefurth the rather gyve hede to your charge, and, as ye have well begunne, avoyde thereby the best ye can, the inconvenience that myght growe by sufferyng of thyngs to passe to or froo withoute your knowledge. And for as moche as it appeareth herebye that suche private persons as be disposed to disquiet wyll not let to take occasion, if thei maye, to conveye messages or letters in & oute by some secret practise, hyr majestys furder pleasure ys for the avoyding hereof that ye shall hensefurth suffer no manner person other then such as arre allredye appoynted to be aboue the ladye Elizabeth, to come unto hir, or have enye manner talke or conference with hir ; anye former instructions or letters heretofore sente yow to the contrary notwithstanding. And nevertheless, yff she shall hirself make anye request unto yow for the havyng of anye booke that ys honeste and sufferable to rede or passe her tyme withall, the quenes highness pleasure ys ye shall cause the same to be sente for and delyvered unto hyr." And again : " We thynke goode ye receive & delyver the books ye wryte off, whyche she requireth to have, foreseeing that non other matter be wrettyn or put in them as may tende to furder inconvenience."

P. 203. *The above excerpts from the Bedingfield correspondence certainly provide evidence for the goat story, which occurs only in Foxe, and there in full detail.*

P. 206. *The same Parliament passed with some hesitation a re-enactment of an old law making the crime of heresy punishable by death at the stake. An attempt of Gardiner's to have Elizabeth's bastardy declared by law failed.*

P. 208. *Elizabeth's attitude toward foreign marriage.* " She saw that it was banishment which was held out to her in the guise of marriage ; she knew that it was the reversion of an independent English crown which she was required to barter for the matrimonial coronet of a foreign dukedom ; and she felt the proposal as what in truth it was ;—an injury in disguise. Fortunately for herself and her country, she had the magnanimity to disdain the purchase of present ease and safety at a price so disproportionate ; and returning to the overture a modest but decided negative, she prepared herself to endure with patience and resolution the worst that her enraged and baffled enemies might dare against her." Aikin.

Mary's eagerness for Philip's arrival. " Of this Match the Queen, who had lost so muche Tyme, was very fond, & earnestly desirous of the Consummation of it ; tho' afterward she had but little Comfort therein." Strype.

P. 210. *Philip's appearance.* Tyler reprints a description from a contemporary letter : " Of visage he is well favoured, with a broad forehead and grey eyes, streight-nosed and manly countenance. From the forehead to the point of his chin, his face groweth small ; his pace is princely, and gait so straight and upright as he loseth no inch of height ; with a yellow head and a yellow beard. And, thus to conclude, he is so well-proportioned of body, arm, leg, and every other limb to the same, as nature cannot work a more perfect pattern. And, as I have learned,

of the age of twenty eight years. Whose Majesty I judge to be of a stout stomach, pregnant-witted, and of most gentle nature."

Philip gravely described ale as "the wine of the country."

P. 213. *The Spanish gallants did not find the English maids at all to their taste, judging by this letter from Pedro Enríquez, reprinted by Hume—it is written from Richmond within a few weeks of the marriage.* “Although the Queen is not at all beautiful, for she is little, and thin rather than stout, she is very red and white. She has no eyebrows, she is a perfect saint, but she dresses very badly. The ladies here all wear farthingales of coloured cloth, without silk, their outer garments being of coloured damask, satin, or velvet, but very badly made. Some of them wear velvet shoes, but most of them kid. They wear black stockings, and even show their legs, some of them up to the knees, at least whilst they are riding, for their skirts are not long enough. They look quite indelicate when they are travelling thus, and even when they are seated. They are not at all beautiful, nor are they graceful in dancing, which with them consists simply of prancing and trotting. None of the Spanish gentlemen are in love with them or think anything of them, nor they of the Spaniards. They are not worth troubling about, or feasting much, or spending money upon, which is a good thing for the Spaniards. All the rejoicing here consists of eating and drinking.” Etc. *Some of his statements seem a bit sweeping, and lead one to suspect that he may have received a well-deserved snubbing from some one of Mary's notoriously virtuous ladies. One of Philip's most important grandes, de Feria, fell in love with and married Jane Dormer, a favourite maid-of-honour.*

P. 214. *Mary's wedding ring.* “The quenes marriage ring was a plain hoope of gold without any stone in it; for that was as it is said her pleasure, because maydens were so married in olde tymes.” *Chronicle of Queen Jane and Queen Mary.*

The chair which Mary used during the marriage ceremony is still to be seen in Winchester Cathedral.

Elizabeth's poem. This is preserved by Hentzner, says Strickland, and Nichols also gives it. There is another more familiar tradition that she wrote with a diamond on a window-pane at Woodstock, just before her departure :

“ Much suspected of me,
Nothing proved can be.
Quoth Elizabeth, Prisoner.” (Foxe)

Bedingfield's pleas for repairs to the gate-house became piteous as the autumn wore on. “If it shalbe determinyd by the quenes highness and you, my L[ords], that this great Ladye shall remayn in this howse, then of necessitie theare must be reparations done bothe to the covering of the howse in leade and slatte, and especiallye in glass and Casemonds, or elles neyther she, nor anye that attend uppoun her, shalbe able to abyde for Colde, and the Cofferer [Parry] maketh me beleve that he can make no provision for wood here for anye money without your L[ordships] helpe.” *And six weeks later:* “I made suit unto your L[ordships] in my latter letter for the glasyng and slatyng of the lodgyngs, which off necessite be to be occupied for the tyme of thys grette ladyes aboode here, wherin I praye your L[ordships] gyve knowledge.” *And as regards his soldiers' pay:* “And now, my lords, unless it pleases you to take order that my brother Anthony may receive money within these ten days now next following for the payment of the quenes soldiery here, which is owing for nine weeks within four days, then I shall be in danger of a late bond which I have entered upon the receipt of four hundred pounds, employed here to the use aforesaid, and to be repaid at London within ten days now next coming, which I have enterprised to be avoided of the daily exclaiming of the poor victuallers in Woodstock and for the better execution of the quenes majesties service. Most humbly beseeching your L[ordships] the rather to tender this, my suit. Even so, committing you all to the Lord Almighty, his most blessed tuition. . . .”

P. 215 *Parry died at the end of 1559.*

P. 217. *The milkmaid episode is recorded by Foxe and others.*

P. 218. *Savoy's visit. He was lodged in Elizabeth's own mansion in the Strand, Somerset Place. The necessity for raising enough money to travel had prevented him from being in time for the wedding.*

P. 221. *Mary's letter. Bedingfield Papers.*

P. 222. *Philip's visit to Elizabeth. Wiesener.*

P. 224. *The scene between Mary and Elizabeth is described by several of the early writers, though there was some confusion as to exactly what month it took place. This has been cleared up. It could not have happened before the spring of 1555.*

P. 228. *Charles' brother was Ferdinand I.*

P. 229. *After some delay Mary appointed Heath, Archbishop of York, as Chancellor in Gardiner's place.*

Pole at Court during Philip's absence. "He had really more authority than he desired ; but was so timorous in exerting it in matters, not only of great, but little, import, that he seemed to be as much afraid of the least lord of the Council as he could have been of Henry VIII, had this prince been still living, and on all occasions after a modest declaration of his sentiments, referred everything to the Council." *Carte.*

It was during this time and the following year that the Dudley and Cleobury conspiracies took place ; the Stafford enterprise was after Philip's return in 1557.

P. 230. *Cecil.* "Throughout the remaining part of this reign, Sir William was passive, in respect to the administration, though active in regard to the interests of the Lady Elizabeth, whose cause he espoused, and whose councils he directed."

Elizabeth's household. "She now lives upon this settlement from her father, but is always in debt, and would be much more so did she not steadily restrain herself to avoid any increase of the Queen's hatred and anger, either by increasing the number of gentlemen and servants of her household, or by adding to her expenditure in any other way. And here I may add that there is not a lord or a gentleman in the kingdom who has failed, but continues endeavouring, to enter her service himself or to place one of his sons or brothers in it, such being the love and affection borne her." *Michiel, in the Venetian State Papers. (Mumby.)* "I tell you true, that the Lady Elizabeth is a jolly liberal dame, and nothing so unthankful as her sister is ; she taketh this liberality of her mother, who was one of the bountifullest women in her time, or since ; and then shall men of good service and gentlemen be esteemed." *Ashton correspondence, in Wiesener.*

P. 232. *Mary's letter. Wiesener.*

P. 233. *The Duchess of Lorraine in England. Carte. Nares.*

P. 234. *England during 1558.* "The English had lost their Hearts ; the Government at Home was so little acceptable to them, that they were not much concerned to support it ; they began to think, Heaven was against them. There were many strange Accidents at home, that struck Terror in them. In July, Thunder broke near Nottingham, with such violence that it beat down two little towns, with all the Houses and Churches in them : the Bells were carried a good way from the Steeples and the Lead that covered the Churches was cast 400 Foot from them, strangely wreathed. The River of Trent, as it is apt upon Deluge of Rain to swell, and over-run the Country ; so it broke out this Year with extraordinary Violence ; many Trees were plucked up by the Roots, and with it there was such a wind, that carried Men and Children a good way, and dashed them against Trees or Houses, so that they died. Hailstones fell that were 15 Inches about in other Places ; and which was much more terrible, a contagious, intermitting Fever, not unlike the Plague, raged everywhere : So that three parts of four of the whole Nation were infected with it. So many Priests died of it, that in many Places there were none

to be had for the performing of the Offices. Many Bishops died also of it; so that there were many Vacancies made by the Hand of Heaven, against Queen Elizabeth came to the Crown: and it spreading most violently in August, there were not men enough, in many Counties, to reap the Harvest; so that much corn was lost." Burnet.

P. 236. *Cecil's position at Elizabeth's accession.* "It was in this her peaceful retirement . . . that this illustrious Princess received the first intimation of her sister's demise, and of her own accession to the Crown; and it is generally supposed to have been communicated to her by Lord Burghley [Cecil] in a particular spot, in the grounds of Hatfield House . . . from which instant, to the hour of his death, forty years afterwards, he may very justly be said to have been her chief and most confidential advisor, counsellor, and minister . . . and it is very certain that the minute of steps to be taken on her first elevation to the throne, was drawn up by him." Nares. *The document is still preserved in the Cottonian MSS.*

Cecil's notes are printed in Nares. The proclamation is in the Egerton Papers.

P. 237. *Her Latin quotation is recorded by many writers of the time.* "It is the Lord's doing, it is wonderful in our eyes."

It is suggested that Cecil was instrumental in preventing, or at least failed to encourage, a last meeting between the sisters, for fear of death-bed promises, and the like.

Pole died the same evening within about twelve hours of the Queen.

P. 239. *The cold is mentioned in the correspondence of the new Spanish ambassador, de Feria.*

P. 240. *This was William Hawkins, father of the famous Sir John and grandfather of Sir Richard, both of whom were in the Armada fight and both sailed with Drake. William was a prosperous sea-captain at Plymouth during Henry's reign.*

P. 241. *King of Sweden, Gustavus Adolphus. Eric died more or less insane after a stormy reign.*

The speech, as rehearsed by her here, was delivered in the same words, as recorded in full by Holinshed.

P. 242. *The prayer was spoken as she left the Tower for the coronation procession, according to Holinshed.*

"The cloud thus set that threatened more stormes, and a quiet calme happening when the rage was at highest, that wished Sun then ascended our Horizon whose rayes (as had beeene hoped) presently dispelled all foggy mysts from England's faire skie; which was, the most mild Princesse Lady Elizabeth, another Deborah, and nursing mother of God's Saints. . . ." Speed.

"After all the stormie, tempestuous, and blustering windie weather of queene Marie was overblowne, the darkesome clouds of discomfort dispersed, the palpable fogs and mists of most intollerable miserie consumed, and the dashing showers of persecution overpast: it pleased God to send England a calme and quiet season, a cleare and lovely sunshine, a quickest¹ from former broiles of a turbulent estate, and a world of blessings by good queene Elizabeth: unto whose graticous reigne we are now to make an happie entrance as followeth. . . ." Holinshed.

¹ release.

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